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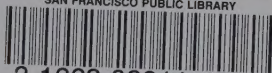
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WITHDRAWN
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ALL ABOARD

A Frivolous Book

BY
W. H. KOEBEL

Illustrated by
H. M. BATEMAN
and others

S. F. PUBLIC LIBRARY

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INTRODUCTION.

A TRUTHFUL author, I have called this work a frivolous book. There was no choice. Such is essentially its nature. It has its deeper moments, as you will see. That is to say, if you undertake a persistent search for the needle in this little haystack. Humour is double-faced: it can weep as well as smile. But it laughs far longer than it cries. Hence the frank adjective in the title!

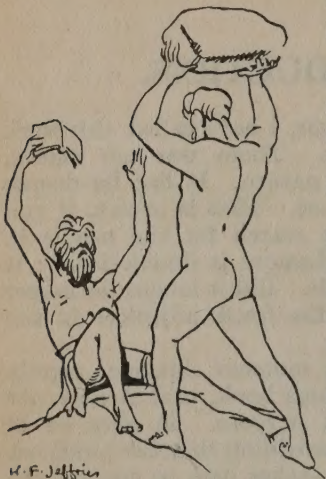
But do not for one moment imagine, merely because this is a frivolous book, that it may not serve a very practical purpose. It may be of almost incredible use, providing that the publisher—as I am sure he will—takes care to employ the most precious and permanent paper. Imagine the part it may play after the next world-war, when the earth shall be as before the flood, minus the faithful mammoth, and the sea shall gleam as empty as a Scottish engineer's whisky tumbler—after the event!

Perhaps in those days there will remain one ancient and learned man, who will remember how to read. Very well, he will read *this* to those shaggy persons in skins on the shore of the lonely sea. They will listen and wonder. Perhaps they will not care to call the reader a liar to his face. Probably not. Lack of civilization does not

imply a want of politeness. Rather the reverse. But one of them will raise a boulder, and smash in his head, as an expression of opinion.

But perhaps something of what that good man read will remain, and float on—float on—until—I have not the least idea until when.

This is, again, frankly, a work of the sea. And I can assure you that not Marryat, nor Clark Russell, nor Frank Bullen ever wrote anything in the least like it. I doubt whether even Conrad will find reason to complain that I am trying



to tread on his own delightful waters.

Far be it from me to say they could not have done it! One's modesty forces one to admit that it simply never occurred to them!

As I have said, this is a work of the sea. But its salt is chastened. It is as Cerebos to the crude product. It is almost morbidly free from disaster and passion. No cocked hats and cutlasses here! On the contrary, it is concerned rather with cutlets and cocktails—if these be the contrary. As an adventurous book—in the broad sense—it simply does not work.

The author of a number of books ought to know

the dangers threatening his profession. It is true that a company of detectives, or perhaps even a stray reader or so, might succeed in bringing the authorship of about twenty-two volumes to my door. In return it does not seem fair that no more than a single book has been dedicated to me. This was written by my friend Lewis Melville, and is called "The South Sea Bubble." At the time I thought it very nice and kind of him. But on reflection, considering the chief field of my work, there is something rather upsetting about the title!

But this is by the way. As I was saying, a hardened author should beware of pitfalls. Yet I would not guarantee that this venture is entirely free from perilous aspects. It may prove a boomerang affair. It deals not only with the ships of to-day—let me at once get in those attractive words "floating palaces," lest the expression be forgotten later—but the people who live in them. Aye, and more, who argue, agree, bicker, loathe, laugh, loll, love, and occasionally revoke at bridge in them.

It is no light task this; it is one from which many would shrink. Yet up to a point—I repeat advisedly, up to a point—this is a bold and fearless book. Now and again it blunders recklessly into that dangerous bay, a truthful patch! I have made so many friends on those pleasant decks that floated over the southern oceans. The tragic question arises: how many of these shall I retain by the time that these searching lines have reached the public? Let me bury my head in the sands of memory, ignoring what may be

looming on the far horizon! There is nothing else for it.

After all, there does remain romance on the sea to-day—and incident. It may be less blood-thirsty, but there is more of it. How could it be otherwise? Compare the life within a fifteen thousand ton liner with that of an old full-rigged ship! You obtain the circumstances of a town as against those of a sleepy village lying in a green hollow.

Imagine what would happen if three-quarters of the population of a town had nothing to do but to find out the most efficient ways of spending their leisure! What work for the employment bureau of the devil, if the proverb is to be believed! Conceive the mountain of scandal arising from the mole-hill inhabited by two—or perhaps three! It need not be thought that a ship is free from mutters and murmurs. But the passengers, influenced by the wide ocean, learn to take them in the wider sense, and to discount the really sharp and spicy bits, generally with reason.

Why, in short, do so many people insist that the disappearance of the sailing-ship—at all events, it is as rare on the waters as a four-wheeler on the London streets—has robbed the ocean of its glamour? Of course, that towering spread of canvas is a pretty thing, fascinating, indeed, at times, most especially when it gives back the rays of the sun, and shines like the pearly wing of a nautical angel.

But let us do the steamer justice. The liner is a stately and majestic thing. It has power—and pomp without pomposity. It is the male of the

sea, and a male free from those romance-destroying trousers, which trails its long, æsthetic hair behind it in the way of smoke.

The liner is masculine because it makes straight for its object. The sailing-ship is feminine because it does nothing of the kind. There is nothing ungallant in all this; the most womanly, and therefore the most charming, of women cannot fail to distinguish between a defence of one's own sex and an attack on the other. Also she cannot deny that the lady sailing-ship is blown by every wind, and is as helpless on a lee shore as a girl surrounded by ten million mice! Sometimes, then, a kind male steamer will come and tow her out. Her own sex are no good to her.

* * * * *

The steamer has a great and blazing heart, which beats with a powerful eloquence. I vow that a steamer can throb as musically as a harp—some harps, anyhow. And to one who loves it, the sound is as restful as the note of a grandfather clock. I will prove it. Let the screws stop in the middle of the night, and the chances are that you will wake up. Why? Because in your sleep you have missed that tranquil, soothing thrum.

Let me tell you something which has just occurred to me. The beat of the screw is a wonderful and amazing thing—who am I, to have discovered this?

Powerful as destiny, it sends the ship through grey waters into green, through green into blue, and all the time the smitten waters turn their cheek and kiss the bow, falling into a white

and blue—or green, or grey—marble trance along the gliding sides. It will stop for nothing short of a pilot, fog or accident—and, last of all, death, when it becomes breathless for a moment or two, as someone that was, and is no more, slips quietly over the side.

It is when the screw beats that the liner *lives*, and, pulsating, goes her way. You may have left



a northern town, southward-bound. Very well, exactly ahead of the bow is a place of glistening whitehouses, of palms, of dusky people, of monkeys, and parrots, and flaming skies. It is far away, but it is straight ahead, and every throb is sending you nearer.

A person who fails to find romance in a steamer should be condemned to six months in the Dol-drums, and to the sight of many stately passing liners. He should also be accompanied by a trained lunatic with electric fans as his only topic of talk.

* * * * *

With the very ink still wet upon it, I am not sure that I do not regret this introduction. It seems to me that there is too much of it. It may have aroused expectations destined to prove as hollow as the inside of a bilious bookmaker after a gale.

It suggests in an uncomfortable fashion the history of some athletic sports which I once had the distinction to manipulate in the shadow of Exmoor. We had a preliminary performance that was a glory in itself—an herald procession of decorated carts, filled with the fairest maids and the bravest men of North Devon. There were young Red Indians on ponies, the sound of drums, trumpets, and megaphones—and quite a lot beyond.

You never saw such a procession ! It convulsed the village and all the neighbouring hamlets. It led to a phenomenal gate. And then the sports began. They went—well, so, so—in fact, they crawled. It was no one's fault really. It so happened that we had been so busy with the procession that no time was left to deal with the sports.

On this occasion, so long as we have the gate, we must sincerely trust that the rest will look after itself !

CHAPTER I.

GETTING ON BOARD.

THE home of the liner is the liquid of the world. No; I fear we must begin again. The haunts of the liner are wherever the waters of the earth are deep enough to float it. This, at least, gives us a really scientific base on which to build up—well, all that follows.

One thing must be understood. We cannot follow a liner on every one of the world's routes. In actual practice this might easily take seven years and several months—or, at all events, quite a long time. Now, the average liner travels at anything between fifteen and twenty knots in the hour. A writer, on the other hand, can seldom produce more than sixteen yards of lines in the hour—at least, not if they are to be lines which will hold the eye for longer than the ink remains wet. I have just taken the trouble to work it out rather meticulously.

In fact, any attempt to exceed this speed limit would not result in a thoughtful book such as this. So you will see that you would have to wait more dozens of years than you need trouble to count for a conscientious work dealing with all the ocean routes.

Probably you desire nothing less than such a delay. This is the principal reason why I have

confined the field of this work to the South American route. There are one or two other factors which urge this course. One is, that I happen to be familiar with the South American route. A second is that I happen to know absolutely nothing of one or two of the others—although this circumstance would not matter in the least if it were really necessary to include them!

As it is, the aim of the work is to be completely thorough. We may as well prove this at once. We will begin at the beginning. Now, the beginning of a voyage on a liner is not on a liner at all. It is either in a taxi, a private motor car, or a special



The Embarkation.

train. Sometimes it takes two out of the three to carry it out properly.

There is something very interesting about a special train which is just about to rush along to the limit of the land, and deposit its passengers at the foot of the gangways leading to the decks of a giant foaming at the funnel in its impatience to slip its leash, and to start on its career towards other climes. There is an air of importance about every one concerned. The travellers feel themselves important because they are going a distance considerably longer than usual; their friends feel them important for the same reason, while the attendants and porters—knowing that these sentiments breed tips as lavishly as rabbits produce their young—make assiduous efforts to preserve the profitable atmosphere.

Moreover, here is an easy test by which to judge of the relative significance of a special train and of the rest. One whistle from the guards will send an ordinary, humble train contentedly on its way. It takes three, with a long interval between each, to persuade a boat-train to move. The thing is a concession to the trials of leave-taking—a little friendly fussiness on the part of the officials in favour of those last words which are sometimes painful enough even in this rapid age, when—in the words of that unjustly unknown authority and modern sage—a man is back again almost before you knew that he had gone!

In one respect only do you board a liner as you would an omnibus or a bicycle. You have to leave the solid earth to obtain the benefit of all three. But you do not simply leap on board an ocean giant

as you used to board a lesser ship. The thing looks like a town, with the wharf as a barren meadow stretching far beneath it. It *is* a town, minus some of the city's noblest attributes, including the tax-collector and the workhouse. Moreover, the ornamental pond, instead of shining in the middle of the recreation ground, lies outside its walls. Also its population is less dependent on the birth-rate—which, in its way, is just as well.

On going aboard a ship you will be surprised to find how few really nice-looking people there are, with the exception, of course, of yourself. This is nearly always the first impression as you watch the newcomers mounting the gangways in their queues. It is not always found permanently correct! Indeed, as the passengers disentangle themselves from other people's hat-boxes and suit-cases, you may be fairly confident of altering your mind. There is something about the close mingling of people and luggage which detracts from the human personality.

At this period, too, the aspects of the ship are a little confusing to one not accustomed to this sort of thing. The place is like an ants' nest laid bare by an inquisitive stick. Every passage pulsates with agitated life. There is little beyond comings and goings. There are hurrying streams of working ants, laden with portmanteaux, kit-bags, suit-cases, dressing-bags, and other impedimenta tinted in black, brown, green, or grey. Then there are the others, the ants of leisure or fussiness, who are conscientiously carrying out their own particular job, which is to get in the way of the workers.

The captain will be in a prominent position just inside. You had better shake hands with him cordially. If he be an acquaintance he will expect it. If he be not, he will think that you know him and that, therefore, he ought to know you. So it all comes to the same thing, and you ought to shake hands in any case. It is a kindly and encouraging act towards one who must feel a little shy and snowed-under by this torrent of humanity pouring on board.

On no account omit this. Further, if his appearance should strike you as particularly dejected, go away tactfully for a time, then return and grasp him by the hand again. There are one or two other reasons why you may as well do this. These are fully explained in a later chapter dealing in the greatest detail with captains and their caprices.

Having done your bit in this way, you may feel yourself justified in leaving the comforted captain for a while. It is time to cast a critical eye on the movements of the other passengers. These latter should not be altogether without interest, since they form part of the human entertainment which the Company in generous silence throws in with the price of the passage money.

You may know the stranger to the route readily. He is a little diffident, is continually rounding the wrong corners, and retracing his steps, and generally fails to come to an anchor for the first ten minutes or so.

There is another type of male passenger whom you will recognize without the least difficulty. He will proceed straight upwards through the social hall to the main deck. Then he will walk

with a complete lack of hesitation to the smoking-room. Having nodded and beckoned to another passenger who is already seated in that galleried apartment, he will call out a ringing but cryptic message.

“George, two of the usual !”

And the smoking-room steward—who for reasons best known to his god-parents and the habits of the line, always is known as George—will advance with a beaming smile of affection.

“With a little extra dash of vermouth in yours, sir, as before ?”

If this is put as a confident statement rather than a question, your suspicions will go a long way towards being confirmed. In fact, you will be justified in supposing that this person has travelled on the route before !

What is the first thing that occurs—or should occur—to the careful man who goes down to the sea in ships ? During the first few hours many circumstances combine to distract his attention—the sight of the receding docks and coastline, greetings, introductions, the antics of the pilot as he climbs down the rope ladder, and a dozen similar performances.

These are snares set to lure him from the narrow path of wisdom. Unless he possesses the temperament of the foolish virgin, one oriflame alone will shine before his eyes—the gleaming locks of his luggage ! Release its bonds ! Unpack while there is yet time ! Set your house in order, lest shirts and socks, and swallow-tails remain in confusion within their prison ! But a few days of this, and divorce is rampant in your trunks ! Those of your

garments which had fellows have lost them, and you will end by wearing a pink sock on the right foot, and a blue one on the left.

The advice is valuable. It is given by one who really knows—and who vows most solemnly that one day he will actually carry out this thing, and thus be preserved from the mortification of these mixed colours.

Anyhow, even if we have not achieved this, we have accomplished something. We have arrived on board, which, after all, is more than a great many other people have done. It is true that so far we have said very little about the sea. But this shows a correct appreciation of local colour. So few people take much notice of the sea now, even when they are on it. It is rather a remote thing. You get it in your bath, but it very seldom comes splashing aboard of its own accord.

Nevertheless, we must make an effort to get the sea in somewhere later on. It is still there. And it is as beautiful as ever. Let me tell you a little about the sea before we start on it in earnest! We will judge it purely by appearances.

In Southampton Water, the Solent, and the Channel it is just what the dear old English climate chooses to make of it. It may be touched with a little grey, green, or blue. But it is very soft and quite endearing. It is the salt water complement of the meadows and the quiet copses—some still survive, you know!

Beyond Cherbourg it begins to show its first sparkles. Down the Bay it enters the first territories of its blue, which deepens and shines more and more until Lisbon is well beneath the horizon

astern. After that it grows more and more translucent, until the time comes when the porpoises, flying-fish, and whales seem to be leaping in and out of the brilliant surface of an azure mirror, and the little sailing nautili look like pearl-winged snails resting upside-down on a vivid expanse of glass.

But—sufficient of this heavy scientific matter ! We are concerned just now with the inside of the ship, and with the passengers, many of whom are considerably less transparent than the sea. We will pass on to another chapter for a glimpse of these.

CHAPTER II.

SOME PASSENGERS.

ON every kind of ship you meet all kinds of people—most especially so on the South American route! Here it takes four languages on a printed notice to explain which bell you should push, and here the most commonplace sailor knows three useful swear words apiece in four languages, while the barber might have been born in every compartment of the Tower of Babel!

You may, if they will let you, hob-nob with cattle kings from Argentina, who think in estates the size of counties; overlords from Brazil who treat their heaps of diamonds as roadside stones; coffee princes from São Paulo who could float the fleets of five nations on their brown liquid if the idea occurred to them, and Chilean emperors of nitrate who could make a garden of the Sahara or the North Pole if they chose to dump their products there, free of charge.

There are others, of course. There are race-horse owners who have paid several tens of thousands of pounds for the privilege of possessing four legs six times as fleet as their own, and a stout heart framed in a pedigree. There are people who regret that some startling automobile invention does not enable them to use a Rolls Royce as a mere station car, and there are ladies who are really sorry that it is not the fashion to make fur

overcoats out of pearls—which, at all events, would give them a chance!

There are directors of companies who tread the decks with a heavy and responsible thud, carrying much canvas, and usually three balance-sheets on the wind. Among them are persons of such affluence that they look profoundly bored if called on to endorse a cheque under the value of fifty pounds or so. They explain in tearful pathos that they cannot afford the time! Really, they have very kind hearts. But they dare not own it. It is their business to hide these as carefully as the plover hides her nest. Otherwise they would be ruined. So they conceal these beneath a very pompous or a very timid manner—very much against their will. Sometimes they rely merely on many extra layers beneath a swollen waistcoat.

There are engineers who plan docks and railway lines; there are oil-experts guaranteed to place their hands on petroleum with that unfailing energy with which the venary pig dives his nose above where the shy and shuddering truffle lurks in terror.

This last sentence requires some explanation. Having an esteemed oil-expert friend, let me hasten to say that I feel convinced—or at all events fairly certain—that these two tribes have nothing—or if they have, nothing that matters very much—in common, except the hunting instinct, which is a noble trait in both. Also, if they had—or even if they have—I would like most emphatically to make it plain that the adjective venary is not actually so insulting as it may sound. Any dictionary will prove this to the hilt.

Nothing could be clearer. But, in order to avoid the slightest chance of a misunderstanding, *revenons à nos moutons*. There is the flock of tourists spying out strange lands; there is the super-commercial traveller, who has the world for his beat, and plasters it with anything from playing-cards and poultices to Government bonds and battleships. There is the young man who is starting out into a new life, principally because his parents or guardians consider that he ought to be anywhere rather than where he was.

And there is the ordinary person, just like you and I. It is astonishing—almost disconcerting—to find out how many of us there are !

We now arrive at a fitting place for a proverb. This will be : *quot homines, tot sententiæ*. If you are not completely familiar with Terence and his *Phormio*—and it is just possible that you may not be, for it is infrequently staged now, and if it were very few young girls would care to take their mothers to it—I will translate this for you. It runs thus : “Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us to see oursels as ithers see us !” It is a free translation, and it is possible that I have somewhat altered the metre of the original. But it is on which, I think, dear old dissolute but dead Terence would have admired. As it is, if there is enough left of him, he will turn in comfort in his grave.

Having thus introduced the note of individuality, let us without any further ado dissect some of the personalities most commonly met with on board. Let us attempt this, moreover, quite calmly, with a total lack of undue bitterness or fulsome praise.



THE KNOWLEDGE MERCHANT.

"Incidentally he knows everything about everywhere."

You have, for instance, a fairly common type on board in the knowledge merchant, who resolutely refuses to hide his wares under a bushel. He is the person who knows—and who insists that you should know that he knows. Incidentally, he knows everything about everywhere.

The knowledge merchant, naturally, is at his best in a port. All that he wants here is an audience. If people fail to surround him of their own accord he will go and fetch them, and then start the semaphore wavings of his arms without delay.

"Bahia," he will say, "the place where the nuts come from. There's many a true word spoken in jest. There's nothing much here but churches and nuts. Now you see that lighter down there? If you were to open the canvas of one of those bales, you would find thousands and thousands of Brazil nuts—used for food and oil. A wonderful product, a Brazil nut, let me tell you—it's . . ."

"But," one of his hearers may object, "those bales have 'tabaco' stamped on them."

"So they have," he will admit cheerfully. "So they have. Now that's very interesting. I'm glad you mentioned it. The reason is the shortage of jute—or canvas. A peculiarity of the place, I nearly forgot to tell you. Those bales *have* contained tobacco—quite right to notice it. But now they serve for nuts. Absolutely the only bit of economy they ever go in for. And, talking about that, I can tell you . . ."

And all the time a tuft of brown nicotine leaf is protruding from a torn corner of one of those bales!

Then there is the man who confessedly knows



"Confessedly knows" nothing at all—asks silly questions,"

nothing at all, asks silly questions, and does not believe you when you attempt appropriate answers. He will demand:

"What's that tub half-way up the mast there?"

"That's the crow's nest," you will say brightly. "There's a look-out stationed there sometimes—in a fog, you know, or something of the kind."

He will shake his head in sober derision.

"Up *there*! What's the use of that. They don't think we're going to fly up into the sky, do they? Looks to me the sort of place where they'd keep the butter cool."

Then he will turn to his neighbour on the other side.

"What's that tub half-way up the mast there?" he will demand.

"That's where they store the Marconi messages," will be the prompt answer.

He will nod his head to and fro.

"Ah," he will say, contentedly. "I thought I should get it in the long run."

The only remedy is to leave in haste before his scornful eye has time to scorch.

Then there is the person of reminiscences—the graybeard who begins his sentences with "In my time," or "You ought to have seen this place thirty years ago." It is a great thing to be a person who remembers. Leaning on a rail, his musing eyes fixed on a stately dock, he will tell you: "I remember when that was just a mud flat, with a couple of adobe huts on it, and a few children and chickens and yellow dogs."

Anyhow, the man of reminiscences can be distinctly interesting, especially if you can persuade



"Then there is the person of reminiscences—the 'greybeard.'"

him to draw the veil from some of the episodes of his unregenerate youth—wrought in that period of adobe huts and yellow dogs. Everything, it seems, was better then. The whisky was older, the girls were younger. In short, how fortunate it is for memory that old times are always the best times !

There are so many other types. There is the prophetic passenger, nearly always an optimist who anticipates the growth of towns and products with an enthusiasm that is catching. He will gaze speculatively at a mud flat, with a couple of adobe huts on it, and a few children and chickens, and yellow dogs—and then he will bet you a thousand pounds that there will be a stately dock there in twenty years' time. Generally he is right, and in any case, one has not the leisure to take up the bet.

There is the pessimist who fails to see any reason whatever for the existence of these places beyond the fact that they yield an unrighteous harvest to the iniquitous. There is the passenger frequently of genuine importance, who keeps himself aloof from the rest for three-quarters of the voyage, and ends by showing himself one of the most genial souls on the ship.

There is, of course, the exact antithesis of this last : the bad stayer, who begins by a shower of favourable impressions, and finishes as the most cordially disliked man in the entire passenger list. There is, again, a quite different type of man, who demands some sympathy. This is the bored man who frankly hates the sea, and everything connected with it. I have known one of this tribe who would haunt the Marconi room like a shadow

In his mind it was the nearest thing to the shore, and the number of buzzing words he sent out and received must have been expensive.

"Why do I do it?" he would answer indignantly to anyone who challenged him on the point. "Can you tell me anything else there *is* to do?"

No respectable home or ship is complete without the patter of children's feet. But they should be the right sort. Usually they are. Sometimes they are not. If they are not, they sometimes, quite against equity, attract by far the most attention. It is difficult to ignore a spirited youngster who has run off with all the available deck-tennis quoits, and who refuses to restore them except at the price of a box of sweets. His victory won, it is not easy to remain completely indifferent to the attitude of his young brother, who, leaning at your elbow in the course of a game of bridge, and breathing out a heavy odour of pear-drops—a portion of the spoil—will jog you lustily with a loud-voiced question: "Why did you play that red thing instead of the black ones that all the others did?"—just too late to prevent the penalty of a revoke.

Also, no ship is completely equipped without its Mysterious Lady. Needless to say, she is attractive. Without attraction where would her mystery be? Men are inclined to surround her, to arrange her deck-chair, her rugs, her books, to bring her sweets and cocktails, and, in fact, to render all that kind of homage which costs very little except a great deal of trouble—which does not seem to be noticed at the time!

Not all men do this. Those who possess female

connections on board seem conspicuously absent from that attractive chair. I do not know, but I cannot help thinking that they have been whipped away as sternly as hounds on a wrong scent.

Frankly, the other ladies do not like the enchantress of mystery. As she passes, every other lady chills into a glacier. Waves of feminine coldness temper the tropical heat. You may hear whispers: "My dear! Three whiskies and sodas *before* dinner! The stewardess told my maid. What *will* happen before we land?"

Usually, nothing seems to happen. You, wondering at this bellicose instinct, may make a mild protest to one of your female friends:

"But look how nicely she behaves!"

To which you get the amazing retort:

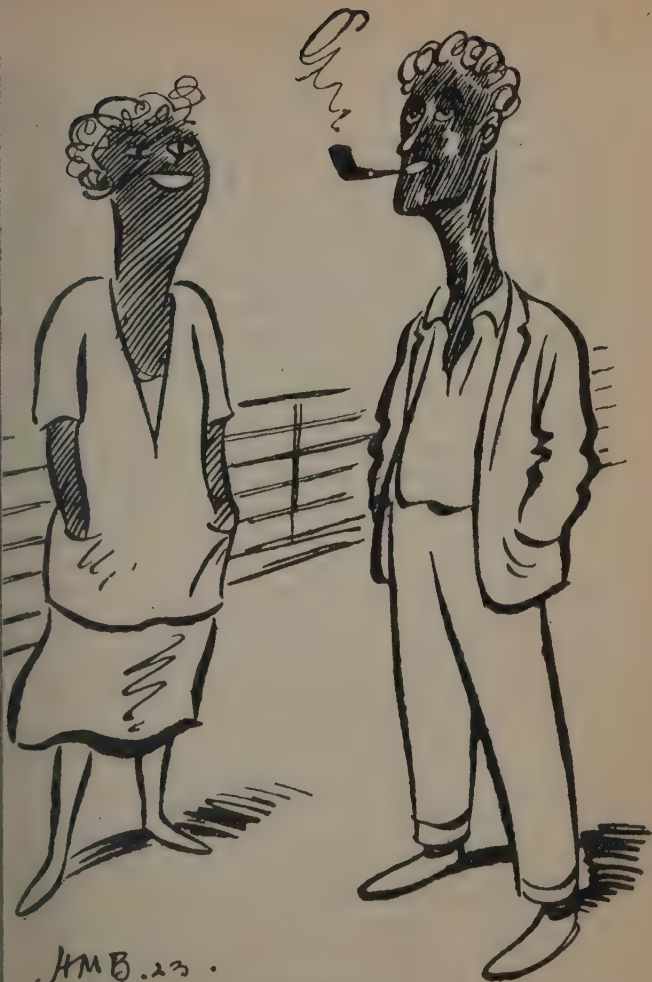
"Of *course*! Naturally—that's just what she *would* do!"

Well there. . . .

* * * * *

There are some people in this world who insist on getting their money's worth, down to the last ounce, or bean, or pellet. There is no reason, I suppose, why they should not. If you don't watch your own interests, the next time you catch sight of them they will be right at the tail end of the queue!

But some people go beyond this. They insist on making other people aware of the fact that they have had their money's worth. There is a certain type of person, generally of an indoor and sedentary calling in ordinary life, who rushes towards sunburn with all the zest of the livery person who hurls himself joyously on Harrogate.



SUNBURN.

is not only men who indulge in this habit. There are women as well."

It is not only men who indulge in this habit. There are women as well—delicately nurtured and well-brought-up women, cherished in their youth by respectable nurses—who fall victims to this distressing mania. You may see them, stretched out at full length on the boat-deck in the midst of their orgy, willing sacrifices to the sun, their skin fizzing and cracking beneath its rays. Their reward comes at the end of the trip.

“My dear!” an admiring female friend will exclaim. “I should scarcely have known you. You look more like a Red Indian than a human being!”

On which the blistered one will preen herself in the complacent knowledge that this trip, at all events, has not been in vain.

CHAPTER III.

THE MASTER MARINER.

[T has already been explained that this book has been conceived on a thoughtful plan. Every line is intended to suggest some particular fragment of a liner—from the stewards' "Glory Hole" to the most palatial *cabine de luxe* which ever sheltered some poor soul struggling heavily beneath the weight of this world's goods. That, at all events, is the conception. One cannot carry out more than a conception. It is up to the reader to do the rest !

A similar plan is adopted towards the inhabitants of the ship. Thus, the last chapter has already taught you much about the passengers. But there is a great deal more to be said. You could hardly expect people such as passengers—whether passionate or even placid—to be passed in review in those few paragraphs !

It is our intention to deal with passengers fully, avoiding undeserved harshness and mercy. But, of course, it is possible to have too many of them at a sitting. On the deck you will observe blue and gold uniforms among the masculine tweeds and flannels and socks, and the linen, voile, *crêpe* *à la Chine*—but we had best not step farther across the threshold of this perilous land of names—in short, among the garments of the ladies.

Following faithfully this procedure here, we will contrive this same mingling, and turn for a time to the officers and some minor officials of the vessel. It is only fair that the captain should come first. He is always the last man to leave a sinking ship, and this will help to put matters right—especially because, ever since the end of the war, he has to put up with such long intervals between his last leavings.

It is always well to be polite to the captain. Of course, it is not necessary to overdo the thing. But there is little harm in pandering to some of his delusions. For instance, he is under the firm impression that the ship is his. Really, of course, it does not belong to him in the least. It is the property of a number of enterprising gentlemen who possess the shares in the company which owns the vessel.

So, if you wish to avoid the risk of any absurd nonsense on the part of the captain, you have a very simple remedy. You merely buy a share in the company just before sailing. You then become one of the proprietors of the whole concern—they tell you so on the printed reports, and it produces a fine, warm feeling—and, of course, much more so of the ship, which is only a single part of the whole corporation.

All you have to do, then, is to take the scribble with you and wave it in the captain's face at the very first opportunity. It is an infallible remedy for the taming of skippers. He may not like you, he may even detest you with a hatred deep enough to shake his form as it paces the bridge. But his power for evil will be paralysed. For instance

remember that he has the power to put you in lions! But I do not mind betting a very heavy sum that, with this magic piece of paper in your possession, you will be able to complete the entire voyage without having once been shackled—that is to say, unless you have burgled the cargo in the hold, or flung the stewardess overboard to see if she would turn into a mermaid.

Captains vary. Those I happen to know are very nice—I must say that for them. But there must be quite a number who would sink a ship as soon as look at her, just for the pleasure of crowning the passengers. The things that captains say about passengers would shock half Limehouse, and turn the other half green with envy. It is high time that some definite move was made about that long-mooted society, the S.O.P.O.P.U. & A.R.—which, of course, is the Society of Protection of Passengers under Lash and Revilement.

Captains' duties seem to vary, too. But sometimes these officials are of real use. A captain may be employed to look after solitary, unprotected female passengers. He can make a speech at the sports' Prize-giving, and he can order the bar to remain open for an hour longer than usual on special occasions. Also, once a week, he may take Church Service, and, surrounded by quite temporary saints in the way of officers, passengers, and men, get a really good turn all to himself, right in the limelight.

Sometimes a captain keeps a parrot. I do not think he really cares in the least for the bird. It is merely because he remembers those old prints of

the "Sailor's Return" of his boyhood days. Now at one time no conscientious artist ever dared to depict a returning sailor without a parrot—undoubtedly an affectionate bird gazing with bright but earnest eyes at the door of its new cottage home. Sometimes there was a monkey thrown in. In the most expensive pictures you might even have the animals side by side. But undoubtedly the cock-of-the-walk was the parrot—probably because that animal is so much easier to draw than a monkey.

I am sure that it is the haunting memory of these prints which induces a captain to cultivate a parrot to-day. He keeps the bird in spite of his own inclinations. He thinks that it makes him look nautical.

Many captains appear curiously ignorant concerning their own profession. Sometimes they seem to become confused over the most simple matters. For instance, you may ask the captain perfectly politely, when the ship will arrive in Madeira, or any other port.

At this he will look bored. Then he will explain that he has suffered the question every quarter of an hour since the voyage began. All this, of course, is only to gain time. But, to do him justice, he will answer at length, perhaps :

"Wednesday morning."

"But," you will say, "are you *quite* certain ? Only five minutes ago my bedroom steward told me that it would be Wednesday afternoon !"

He has a moment of doubt. Clearly this is a poser. For a moment he seems quite uncertain what to say. Then at length he replies :

"Oh, did he? Then, of course, it *will* be Wednesday afternoon."

Now, why could he not have said this straight out at first, like a man?

The annoying part of the affair is that the ship usually *does* arrive on Wednesday morning, or whatever time it might have been that the captain chose for his guess!

A captain is never more unreliable than when he is in a confidential mood. He will even go to the length of trying to convince you that his life is hard. Frankly, I cannot see it. He has three good meals a day, and lives rent free in quite a nice suite of rooms. He says to a man "Do," and he does; he says to another "Don't"—and he doesn't. In fact, he owns the monopoly of all the back-answers in the ship. All he has to do in the way of work is to see that the vessel does not hit the mud in the wrong places. This ought to be child's play, considering how often there is no land in sight to bump into even if you wanted to.

Besides, the captain can enjoy himself in his own way more than anyone else on board. He may relieve an hour of boredom by playing a game which seems to amuse him greatly. You can scarcely fail to notice it the moment it begins. When you hear the anxious clanging of a bell and three short blasts from the horn, when your steward flings down your clothes in a heap on the deck, and bolts from the cabin like a rabbit with a ferret gnawing at the short hairs of its brief tail, and when there sounds a thudding of feet overhead, and deep callings and shrill whistlings fill the air, when the alleyways are packed with hurrying

men laden with bags, biscuits, and bottles, when the bar is untenanted, the shop shuttered down and the razor has fallen from the barber's hand when in the butcher's shop the side of beef rests in red solitude with the hatchet but half-way through it, when the back of the ship's black cat is arched and bristling with amazement and anger—then you will know that the ship is on fire!

Or, at all events, you will know that the captain has decreed that it shall be in a state of fire for the time being. There are very few passengers who have not been thrilled by their first sight of a fire drill. Moreover, who would have believed that there were so many men on the ship? There they are, officers, engineers, sailors, firemen, stewards



and dozens of other officials all spread out in lines before each boat. One imagines that they must have ransacked every nook and cranny in the ship to rout out so many different kinds of applicants for a row on the ocean!

But this kind of excitement is only for the inexperienced. After a time one knows perfectly well that none of those boats will be lowered as far as the water, and that the hoses will merely play upon the sea—which even many of the quite untravelled must know is one of the most unusual places in the world for a fire.

Of course, if captains and other grown-up people want to pretend there is a fire, and then to play about with what is not there, well, they must do so. Personally, I think it rather a waste of time for a lot of men to stand in front of a boat and try to look intelligent.

Mind you, I don't deny for a moment that the performance is reassuring. But, supposing a fire should break out! I have the strongest suspicion that you would know nothing about it until it was over. This is the sort of thing that would happen if an officer were questioned by a timid passenger:

"Smoke?" he would say. "*What* smoke? Oh, yes. I see what you mean, that little whiff right aft there. Probably comes from the second-class galley. Perhaps the cat's sitting too near the fire, and getting her hair singed. Careless fellows, these cooks! And, talking about cooks, when I was on the West Indian Service . . ."

Yes, they go on just like that.

But, as for this other thing—well, as I have explained, it is merely done to amuse the captain when he finds himself short of other toys to play with.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHIEF ENGINEER AND THE DOCTOR.

THE chief engineer usually inclines to be a strong, silent man. He is not necessarily taciturn by temperament. It is merely that his habit of listening to the endless chatter of his engines makes him an audience rather than a talker.

There will come a moment when he will approach you with a fell purpose in his eye. That organ shows a glint which suggests steel, and it is steel which is in his mind. He has come to invite you to inspect the engine-room, and it is very polite of him to do it.

You will accept, thanking him, and after that your soul is no longer your own. You are led away to where men place pieces of cotton-waste in your hands. You are transferred to the doorway of a glittering inferno, where enormous flashing things roar and rattle, cough, groan, and shout, as they jump, kick, and revolve, while giddy iron stairways lead down to the fierce glow beneath.

It is all very admirable and most wonderful. But a gigantic steel crank or column, or something of the kind, can be a most distressing neighbour. Especially when it sends all its tons of weight out towards your ribs, only stopping with a fierce annoyed clang when within a few inches of them.

then it jumps back with a snarl—to have another shot about three seconds later. Supposing the creature, or the creature's keeper, made a mistake—what a realistic imitation of a smashed egg-shell there would be!

Personally, I am profoundly ignorant as to what makes any wheel go round. I am not even quite certain why the front end of the ship should push through the water just because some wheels are turning round inside her. Also, I am by way of being a hardened and callous ignoramus. I don't know that I really want to know.

But, of course, the chief engineer, if he be a proper chief engineer—as he always seems to be—loves every shaft and bolt and nut of this noisy collection. They are his family, on whom he pours soothing oil, and to whose crooning song he listens with a beam of paternal satisfaction. He has good reason, no doubt, for the influence of these engines extends in more directions than one. There is, for instance, the excitement concerned with the daily run.

Every day on board the ship there is a sweepstake concerned with the run of the ship. Sometimes this is quite a profitable affair. If, for instance, the vessel has steamed three hundred and fifty miles, and you have drawn a ticket bearing that particular number, you will collect the pool. This implies, of course, that you will act as a fine host at the next meal at your table, and will attend to the needs of various persons of parched appearance who will congratulate you in the smoking-room. Unless you be extremely popular, you will probably lose very little by the transaction.

Of course, if you can afford to win the sweepstake often enough, there is a very simple method of doing this. You merely walk up to the chief engineer and remember his nationality. If this be not Scotch, it ought to be. So that if any hitch occur in the subsequent negotiations, it will be the man's own fault, not yours.

You see, the chief engineer has quite a lot to do with the day's run. It is true that the captain and his officers, knowing that the result of the sweepstake ought to be declared just after midday, obligingly get busy on the bridge, and strike attitudes with sextants just before that hour. But, believe me, they are helpless without the chief engineer, who comes up with the tale of the revolution of his screws.

Now, nothing should be simpler for a really amiable chief engineer than to screw his revolutionary tale just a bit one way or the other. So, as I have said, you will approach the official, letting finance, firmness, and friendship beam freely from your eyes.

"Chief," you will say, rustling some notes—or any other bits of paper—musically in your pocket, "I have drawn number three hundred and fifty in to-day's sweep. Need I say more? No! Good! We understand each other."

Then you will order a cocktail and two glasses. In dead silence—shared by the chief engineer—you will fill either glass exactly to the same extent. You will empty the first glass, then the second—the silence still shared by the chief engineer. It is enough. He understands perfectly. It means "halves."

After this a mere miracle can prevent your winning. You have aroused the official's cupidity and thirst at the same time. All you have to do is to consult the Marconi news in order to decide on the best investment for your sweep winnings—that is to say, if you sit at a table entirely by yourself!



Of course, in such matters one has to use discretion. Probably not more than nine out of ten chief engineers will fall in on the spot with these reasonable and liberal views of yours. The precaution, therefore, is simple. Beware of the tenth man!

There is another matter in connection with the chief engineer which should not pass unnoticed. You may, or may not, be familiar with that time-honoured Saturday night toast at sea: "Sweethearts and wives!" Now, this gallant and loyal toast was probably invented long before engines. It was, therefore, almost certainly a chief engineer who was responsible for the more recent addition of the words: "May they never meet!"

Almost every circumstance unites to prove this. This final prayer is eloquent of forethought, precaution, and attention to detail, all of which merits are justly claimed by the chief engineer.

And then, too, there is that occasional glint in his eye.

In at least one respect the ship's doctor is one of the most unfortunate beings on the vessel. He suffers from a levy on capital. The thing occurs automatically the moment he steps across the gangway from the shore to the deck.

What is the doctor's capital? Advice. Advice to a number of persons at so much per head from his stock-in-trade. Well, as I have said, his mere arrival on the vessel causes the loss of no less than fifty-five per cent. of this.

You know the doctor's comforting manner on such occasions as he pronounces :

"A little run down, my dear fellow—a few signs of strain. Well, there's a remedy—quite a simple remedy. Just a nice quiet fortnight by the sea. Get right away from affairs—keep in the open air. . . ."

Now this is exactly where the circumstances do him down rather badly. By all means let a passenger on a liner break a leg, sprout an appendix, or fall down a hatchway. Let him even overfeed, and take every reasonable means of producing unusual pains in his interior. The doctor will be delighted. But this other. . . .

I knew a doctor in Madeira who used to bless the Lord for permitting the loquat to flourish in that pleasant island. The after-effects of that attractive fruit, he explained, produced more than one half of his income. In fact, he lived largely on what the loquat left behind. Now his comrade on the ship is exactly in his situation—minus the loquat !

That is why the marine medicine merchant sometimes paces the deck with lagging feet and a pensive mien. He is working out problems of patients and change of air. It is such a popular programme, and he has so little choice. A week in the stokehold; a day in the crow's nest—these would probably pall, and there is little beyond.

So the doctor has little to hope for, beyond the chance of an accident. You may see him at the lowest landing of the lift, gazing upward with hungry eyes. But the thing always seems to come down at the same pace, and he continues his watch more from the force of habit than from that of any real hope.

Nevertheless, for one in his circumstances, his disposition remains remarkably bright. There are compensations, moreover. If the health of the first-class passengers turn out to be really embarrassingly robust, is there not the second-class, out of which may yet appear a patient? Failing this, there is the teeming steerage, with all its potential outbreaks of leprosy, hay-fever, and tennis elbow.

The doctor is apt to be touchy on certain points. On your first arrival on board it is unwise to ask him the way to your cabin. On my very first sea trip—India-bound in a P. & O.—I happened to fall into this error, and the question was coldly met. It was not that I thought the doctor was a steward, but he thought that I thought he was one.

It was not until when, much later, we had become associates, and—discovering a deep-rooted horror, amounting to monomania, on his part, of

touching anything feathered—that the situation became altered. Then, three or four of us, with the sheer brutality of youth, placed a dead, unplucked hen on his slumbering breast. When, on his awaking, he had raced three times round the deck in a species of ambulatory fit, and had been brought back to reason by an extravagant amount of brandy and soda, all stiffness was at length removed. But not until then.

Except for some such sound reason as this, there is little object in provoking a ship's doctor. Remember that he has charge of the medicine chest. The day may come when you will plead with him for just one drop of cooling castor oil to place on your parched tongue. If he be an enemy, what is to stop him from giving you dry pills or powder instead?

CHAPTER V.

THE PURSER.

THE purser is nearly always a cynical person. He may disguise this trait ; he may even smile brightly, and pretend to enjoy life. When you get to know him better you will realize the hollow mockery of it all. If his profession has not made of him a profound pessimist, very well then, he will not be sailing on the sea at all. He will be sitting in an imaginary official cabin in a real lunatic asylum, surrounded by a crowd of visionary passengers, all clamouring for the worst cabins !

The captain, chief engineer, and doctor may be most familiar with the works of the ocean, engine-room, and passengers respectively. But the purser runs straight up against the human nature of the whole travelling outfit. He cannot even love his fellow men as he might quite possibly desire. That is why his rare flittings about the deck are furtive, and that is why he keeps a wary eye pointing in several directions at the same time, just like a rabbit scampering about his warren when ferrets are about !

All the time he goes in fear. There is seldom a moment during which his heart does not thump in dread of questions such as :

“Purser ! *Would* it be possible to change my cabin for one on the other side of the ship ?”

"Look here, Purser, there's a woman next to me who howls like a cat in her sleep. At least, I suppose it's a woman—might be a menagerie. I'm fed up. What are you going to do about it?"



And then a perfectly charming girl will confront him:

"Isn't the voyage delightful?" she will gush. "And isn't the weather lovely?"

He agrees, with relief and joy.

"But it's getting hot at nights."

"A little," he will admit.

"I'm so glad you agree with me. Then *please* may I have another electric fan in my cabin?"

But I have only once seen a purser really moved to anger. Curiously enough, the occasion was quite a trivial one—the sort of thing that might happen to anyone at any moment.

It was quite the tiniest of objects which brought about the explosion. It happened that a mere marmoset, a creature of some ounces bought at Bahia, had slipped its waist out of its confining collar. Naturally, it took to the nearest approach to the woods, and danced blithely about the masts, rigging, and cranes. Shouted endearments and

proffered food produced no other result than a chatter of mutinous defiance.

Obviously something had to be done. The lady owner went to the purser, who, after all, was the most likely person to deal with an unreasonable monkey. As it happened, his office was locked, for he and his assistant were occupied with some accounts. But a certain amount of persistence will achieve anything—even the opening of a purser's door. And, after all, there seemed just cause. The accounts did not matter because they were in their proper place. Whereas the monkey was not.

If you will believe it, that purser's lack of interest in the marmoset was so profound as to become violent. First of all he said that he had never chased a monkey in his life, and that nothing would induce him to begin now. Then he explained, more quietly, that they had forgotten to bring the marmoset hounds on board that trip. From this, of course, we took it that his first sentence had not been entirely truthful, and that he had more experience in this sort of thing than he cared to admit. Finally, he asked if he were expected to shin up the masts after a thing that was all tail and no body.

In short, the purser was morbidly reluctant. He would catch anything, he said—measles, mumps, meningitis, malaria, madness—rather than one single little monkey! In the end the hunt had to be left to a pack of deck-stewards, quarter-masters, and passengers.

After that, the marmoset settled the question by tumbling from aloft. The catastrophe was due,

it seemed, to a misconception concerning the number of branches possessed by masts. It died soon afterwards. But in any case I think it would have done that. The only survivor of all the homeward-bound marmosets with which I have been acquainted is one which flourishes in a special chamber of its own in the New Forest, with a nice little radiator, to which it can attach its little chest when smitten by the cold.

Every possible belated compensation was made. It was to the accompaniment of not a little ceremony that the poor tiny body went overboard, decently hidden in a cardboard chocolate-box coffin. How that malignant purser's conscience allowed him to come upon the scene at the most solemn moment of all I do not know. But he did, and his eye beamed with an "I told you so" expression, joined to the light of an unashamed thankfulness.

In spite of all this, there is no reason why you should not be kind to pursers. From time to time they experience their moments of real terror. I remember one such occasion at Lisbon.

The episode occurred towards the end of the Portuguese monarchical period, and—perhaps, because I had once perpetrated a book on the country—the authorities would sometimes send out a launch to take me ashore on the occasions when one was passing by the capital, so to speak.

This time, the launch having politely appeared, I had clattered down the gangway, and was in readiness to leave, when the purser's face, furrowed with anxious lines, appeared over the rail far above:

"Could you take a passenger? Two passen-

gers?" he implored. His voice might have been that of a man parched to death, beseeching water.

"Ten, if you like," I assured him.

"Then, for the sake of heaven, don't cast off before they come!" he urged, and abruptly disappeared.

Presently an elderly man and a charming girl descended the gangway. I had scarcely set eyes on them before, as they had boarded the crowded ship at Madeira, and we were homeward-bound. They stepped on the deck of the launch. There was an instant's pause.

"Well," said the stranger, "how much longer are you going to hang about *now*?"

The Portuguese launchman shoved off.

"This is a rotten Company," continued the stranger.

"Personally," I explained, "I am rather devoted to it."

He took not the slightest notice, except to raise his voice.

"If I had my way," he pronounced, "I'd have warned off the high seas. It's rotten! Rottenly run! Damnably mismanaged! Contemptible set of sea-sharks!"

"Are there any others?" I asked him, with a bright but unwise smile.

Before, he had glowered. Now, he flamed. He talked as fast as the rapid flood of the Tagus, which was sweeping by the launch.

"Infernally amusing, no doubt! This is not the time for cheap gibes. They'll not serve you in the end, my good fellow—not an atom! I'm going into this matter to the hilt. Once more, why did the shore launch leave at nine o'clock when the

notice said ten ? Here we have been, my daughter and I, kicking our heels all this time. It's—it's—damn it—it's incredible ! Now *why* ?”

“I happened to see the notice board,” I told him, “and it said nine o'clock, I can assure you.”

He jumped up, exploded, sat down, cleared his throat, and at last fixed on me the glint of a steely eye.

“Of course ! I might have known it. Naturally ! You're in league with the purser.”

I stared with him.

“Why ?”

“Aren't you the agent ?”

“No,” I told him.

“But isn't this the agent's launch ?”

“This fine vessel,” I assured him, “represents no small part of the floating might of Portugal. But I'm very glad to be able to take you ashore in it, if it's of any service.”

His face fell in the most extraordinary fashion, just like that of a boy who, thinking he has a butterfly under his hat, finds nothing but a little clover there.

“Good God !” he stammered. “My dear sir ! My dear fellow ! And so we're your guests ! Didn't know. *Why* didn't you tell me ? Upon my soul, I don't know *what* to say ! Look here now—let's think it over ! My great heavens, I've got it ! We're lunching at the Avenida Palace Hotel ; do come and join us !”

As it happened, I could not, but the remainder of the little trip was a perfectly pleasant and amicable one. He was a peppery old retired general, landing in Portugal for a run over the Peninsular battlefields.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STEWARD.

AS a rule, you may take it that the steward is a very good fellow. If you be an experienced traveller, he will discover the fact at once, and there will exist a link between you from the start. Ashore, no such opportunity of comradeship arises. You may be an arch-expert in hotel life, but the man who valets you will have no reason to suppose that you do not hail from Slumbridge on the Ooze, where you dine in the middle of the day and toy with tripe and onions on a Sunday.

If, on the other hand, you tread the spotless planks for the first time, the steward will probably open his linen breast to you and begin your marine education. He will not be able to take you beyond a certain standard, for, after all, the steward is only a sailor in so far as he does shore duties on board a ship! It is quite superfluous to ask the steward's opinion on the forthcoming weather, the position of the vessel, and how long the captain means to stay in the next port. He will always give you an answer, but this will not be remarkable for much beyond cheerfulness.

The table steward is usually of the same kidney. The English shore waiter languishes under a somewhat dubious reputation, which, I fear, is



frequently deserved. There are some notable exceptions, but it is a lamentable fact that the average French or Italian waiter can give him five courses out of six—including that difficult hole, the boning of a sole—and beat him hollow on the last green. But among these foreigners (have you ever taken the trouble to notice them?) are men with the countenances of Napoleon, Julius Cæsar, Richelieu and a bevy of other giants, who will cheerfully fetch food and flattery in return for no more than a tenth of the amount of the bill, or whatever the sum may be suggested by you as a tip.

As a private person, our own waiter is probably honest, and possibly painstaking; but as a waiter, wherever his heart may be, he dallies and wears his grease on his sleeve. Compared with him, the steward is as the stag to the hippopotamus, or—why should not the metaphor be salt?—as the fleet mackerel to the leisurely oyster.

Of course, everything must have its beginning, even a steward's career. Quite recently I was brought into lengthy contact with one who had entered into the profession quite late in life. The circumstances were unusual. There had been a strike of stewards in England, and these villains—it is curious how a very pleasant body of working-men become villains the moment they strike!—had refused to man the ships. Assistance had been called in from without, and the ship which bore me home from Buenos Aires had been manned by strike-breakers, mostly of an amateurish turn of mind.

So this was my bedroom steward's first voyage

He had left a public-house near Covent Garden in the charge of an assistant, while he set out on the adventure, which was largely with the object of a change and sea air. He was as helpful as could be, and chattier than would have been believed possible in a mere human being with normal tongue muscles.

It was at Rio that the beginnings of the real intimacy grew. They developed in a curious and intricate fashion. The ship was lying alongside the quay all night, and a large party from the shore were determined to make the most of the occasion. It was in the early hours of the morning, and the smoking-room stewards had retired, when a clamour arose for champagne with which to toast—once more—their departing friends. A bold volunteer, a local resident, skipped down the gangway, and disappeared along the brilliantly-lit avenue. Presently he returned, bearing four gold-foil bottles in a basket.

A few drops sufficed, even for the most affectionate of the leave-takers. Three full and slighted bottles remained, of which I was apologetically asked to take charge. As, early next morning, the vessel, in the shadow of the Sugar-Loaf peak, was gliding out to sea, the steward entered with tea. He glanced at the three bottles, looked again, and bent over them with interest.

"That's a funny wine, sir," he said, "judging by the label. Sweet enough to sicken a bee, I'll bet a dollar."

"That's why it's there," I admitted. "Any use to you?"

"Not to me, sir," he protested. "Not even if

my tongue was a barge pole. But I can *use* it—on some others.”

So he departed with the three bottles. The incident seemed to give him a respect for my palate, which was increased when he discovered that I knew my London moderately well. After this there would occur a monologue every morning as he entered to prepare the bath. First there would sound a hissing of water, and then he would reappear, his face and eyes both shining, the first with heat, the second with the zest of a topic which was bound to interest us both.

“If I’d a bath-room like that,” he said, “I’d build some bedrooms round it, and knock Claridge’s out o’ business in a month or two. *And*, talkin’ o’ that, you know Sammy Harper, him that used to have the ‘Marquis of Blackpool’? Well, perhaps you don’t remember his name. ‘Alf a mo. You’ll know him as the ‘Old Scotch Bard’—what he was popularly known as. That’s it, of course. Well, you’ll remember Sammy left the ‘Marquis of Blackpool’ because of some dirty work done by the ‘tecs after closing hours. Then he opened up in the ‘Green Whale,’ and what d’you think’s ‘appened now? Just because a few nice quiet fellers make a book on his premises, ‘e’s ‘ad another warning; ‘ad the letter yesterday in Rio, tellin’ me all about it. Just another spot or two o’ that kind and poor old Sammy’ll have to go out o’ business. But don’t you let on a word of this, sir—it ‘ud make mischief for certain. And pore old Sammy’s got a ‘eart of gold. It’s ‘ard luck when things gets up from nowhere and ‘its yer. Look at old Freddy Wills—‘im that bought

the 'Shover's Arms' from Teddy Blake's widder, what died before the fire in a fit two months afterwards—all screwed up and contorted she was when they found her. Well, there's a case . . ."

It was not the faintest use endeavouring to explain that I was less intimate with these estimable folk than he imagined. In any case, I grew to know them very well before the end of the voyage!

But do not imagine for a moment that the profession of steward is limited to cabins and tables. There are quite a number of other varieties. There is the library steward, who sometimes knows from the first brief glance at a would-be reader whether he or she is mentally hungering for Maeterlinck, Ethel M. Dell, Shakespeare, Kipling, Charles Garvice, Ibsen, Hutchison, Browning, or Mrs. Asquith—and hands out the goods accordingly.

There is the smoking-room and bar steward, at least as expert in his own particular branch of the profession. Among bar stewards there are giants who have risen to a sublime height. They are those who have invented a special cocktail, and have named it after the ship they adorn. You should treat such as these with the respect they deserve. Believe me, it profits more to be the author of a wet drink than of a dry book!

You would expect the smoking-room steward to be a genial soul. He is. But he has the memory of a money-lender, which does not seem quite appropriate. It is true that his gift lies only in the direction of faces and tastes, which is to his customer's advantage. Also he is wont to possess

a sense of humour, for which the I.O.U. profession is not remarkable, so far as one has gathered.

Very frequently the smoking-room steward is by way of being a real wag. I have known one who confessed that his unregenerate youth had been spent as a clown in a circus. As a pantomimic artist he was a continuous, carefully restrained feast, for all the time he kept within the rigid bounds of his calling. But he could bring a plain glass of beer to a still plainer customer in at least ten different ways, every one of which was a quiet masterpiece in the way of facial expression. He could be stately, hurried, or merely pathetic, and he specialized in being on the very verge of an accident, which never quite came off, but which invariably kept on tenterhooks those spectators who had not fathomed his powers.

Then there is the deck steward, whose profession demands very considerable enterprise. He is a consultant as well as a practitioner. It is part of his daily toil to employ watchful solicitude in the advising of the inexperienced as to the best spots for their chairs, much as an agent at the seaside will assist the visitor in his search for lodgings. Every morning, too, he chalks his mystic signs on the deck in preparation for the various games. But, unlike the pavement artist, he modestly disappears from the scene of his efforts. He comes into his greatest own in the course of the sports, when he has the opportunity of shining with a brilliant light.

Finally, there are the great among the stewards, the chief steward, the *maitre d'hotel*, and those others who stand here and there, with eyes eloquent

of the keenness of the eagle and the watchful wisdom of the owl. These are the men who control the streams of the uniformed legions, and who bow their heads to none save the purser and the captain.

Among them is one whose task is almost superhuman. For the remotest hope of success it is essential for him to combine various qualities. He must possess the suavity of a Balfour, the diplomacy of a Curzon, the steadiness of a Bonar Law, the back-answers of a Birkenhead, the persuasiveness of a Lloyd George and the lofty ideals of a Woodrow Wilson. Even then it does not follow that he will triumph. He is the man who arranges the seats in the dining-saloon, and thus produces the *mise en scène* of the affections and wars of the community !

CHAPTER VII.

OCEAN INTERLUDES.

A LADY once vividly described to me how deeply she dreaded the first bath or two in which she was destined to splash on board a steamer! Perhaps I should explain that these coincided with her first day or two on board, otherwise the lady's habits might be misunderstood. She was haunted by the fear that the captain might choose that particular time to have an accident. It would be an awkward place in which to be caught napping, so to speak! Again, supposing the chief engineer were careless enough to allow an explosion to blow her into the ocean—well, it would be only too plain to all who had time to look that she had been shot out without even the comforting shelter of a bathing costume!

A similar diffidence seems to occur in earthquake countries. There is the story, for instance, of the nervous man in Valparaiso, who, when the first motor lorry known to the Pacific city came rumbling and thundering past his hotel, leaped from his tub in a panic, and emerged triumphantly into the street clothed in his sponge!

In these earthquake countries such timidities certainly remain near the surface—after all, with no little reason. On a modern liner they perish

long before the farewell flowers brought on board from the shore. Even the most nervous of the inexperienced take a remarkably short time to discover that the perils of the sea to-day are far more connected with the possible wreck of a liver than that of a ship.

On the other hand, a spell of rough weather may well be somewhat boring in its effects. No real sailor will ever pretend to enjoy a gale more than a calm, although after a time he grows more or less to ignore both. Besides, as regards ships, there is a difference between the movements of an elephant and a flea.

You may still experience those of the latter if you want to. Try an eighty-ton yawl in a high gale in Portland Bay, when timbers creak and canvas thunders, and the low gunwale is buried deep in foaming water, while the spume sweeps the ship like a snowstorm and the wind shrieks in the rigging! Now, that little ship *is* a ship of tradition, and behaves as such, plunging, straining and kicking like a live thing.

A giant liner does not do that sort of thing. If the weather be sufficiently bad she will roll lazily, or heave herself upwards and downwards in slow pitchings—a leisurely proceeding, which, nevertheless, appears to arouse the ire and interiors of some on board.

Yet I would not say that anxious moments do not occur from time to time. There are occasions when, from the bridge, the captain's eagle eye peers in straining keenness ahead, above and beneath. At length he descends, his face set in grim lines. Obviously the moment is critical. It

is only a couple of the very boldest passengers who dare to approach him.

They remain silent. Only their eyes plead out the mute question. The captain struggles with his emotion. Then the words burst from him, as though wrenched forth by some force stronger than his own:

"No dancing to-night!"

After a moment of appalled silence the news spreads like wildfire. Presently the ship echoes to the sobs of weeping, wild-eyed girls. It rattles with the gnashing of the teeth of young and agile men. All in vain; the die has been cast. There is no fighting so formidable a fate!



But really rough weather may produce quite a different kind of tragedy, from without. Witness the following. We had experienced a gale all the way from the Needles. The vessel was lying off Leixões, the Port of Oporto, a harbour ill-liked by skippers in foul weather.

The sky was grey and black, the sea was grey and white; the distant land was swathed in a uniform, and darker, grey. The wireless had been

fizzing and spluttering. There had been talk and argument between sea and shore. Then the screw began to throb. The ship's bow turned slowly outwards. No Leixoës this trip!

Just then, as the great vessel began to get under way, came a terrific wave, and on its crest careered a body, in blue trousers and dull pink-striped shirt—that of a drowned fisherman. Up and up rose the crest of the wave, and that limp form soared straight for the ship. For a moment it looked as though it would be lifted over the rail of the lower deck. There it hovered—doubting, twisting. Then sullenly the wave sank, and with it went from sight that poor visitor who had all but come aboard.

Now and again, too, the waters provide a thrill on a larger scale. Here is a scene in the Bay of Biscay. The hour is breakfast time, and the weather is what might without the slightest exaggeration be called dirty.

Notwithstanding the roll of the vessel, the scene within the white-and-gold saloon is animated enough. The tables are fairly well filled; there is a buzz of talk and a subdued clatter of knives and forks. Numbers of uniformed stewards glide between the tables that, with all the other aspects of the great cabin, are so strongly suggestive of a palatial restaurant ashore. And the imposing figure of the *maître d'hôtel* is worthy of the most brilliant of these, as, a satellite at each elbow, he stands beneath the clock, casting glances of critical scrutiny into the remotest corners of the saloon.

The ports are closed. From time to time, half

a dozen of them in a row are darkened of a sudden as the waters come swirling up against them with a faint thudding and splash. But these suggestions of an outer disturbance are insignificant—as they should be in a vessel that, boasting five figures of tons, is warranted to plough her way in comparative peace through the tail-end of a once-dreaded Biscay gale. In any case, the matter is not of sufficient importance to distract the passengers' attention from a breakfast kidney or from the talk of a neighbour.

A man, notorious as the ship's grumbler, has beckoned to the *maitre d'hotel*. There is no mistaking what is to come. What else will it be if not a complaint, followed by a tirade against the Company as usual? Then, ere he has spoken a word, the light of battle dies from his eyes. The unexpected distant sound of an engine-room bell has stricken him dumb. The thudding of the screw has diminished—in the heart of the Bay of Biscay! There is a movement on the part of the occupants that ripples the length and breadth of the saloon. The eyes of the majority are on the captain's table; the latter's place is empty.

There is a general laying down of knives and forks, as a couple of passengers are seen to be hastening from the spot. Their exit is the signal for that of all the rest. Up the broad, panelled stairway they stream; up another, another, another, and yet another, until they emerge at length upon the upper deck.

Without, the Bay looms a dull green-grey, its surface splashed with lines and patches of white.

One could scarcely believe that one was near to such a scene—in the saloon below. There are squalls that gather and sweep forward to the accompaniment of blinding rain, while the rollers send past their sullen surges with a hiss. To leeward is a steamer lying in the trough of the seas. There is a small white cloud at her whistle, and as the leviathan draws nearer the faint sound of it pierces the air. It is blowing without cease. It is evident now, even to the eye of a passenger, that there is something sinister in the dreary heaving of the stranger's hull.

Then the unmistakable signs of tragedy reveal themselves one by one. The boats of the small steamer are gone, and the decks swept by the sea. There are some who assert that the hull is lower in the water than when first seen; there are others who pooh-pooh the idea of any mishap.

"If all is well," retort the first, "why should those crouching figures be huddled in a group upon the bridge?"

At this juncture there is an interruption that leaves one and all breathless. The quick thunder of tramping feet sounds from the topmost deck above; there are hoarse shouts mingled with the creaking of boat tackle. The affair is going to be exciting then, after all! A couple of sybarite passengers have sped down below, to return, each bearing a cup of coffee. There is no reason why the thing should not be witnessed with all possible comfort after all; the lee side of the deck here is as warm and as sheltered as could be desired!

The boat comes down in a series of jerks from above, her life-belted crew standing within her in

readiness. It is a lengthy descent. But that slow climb down the shining black side of the vessel is over at last. The boat has touched water now, and has become a wild thing. The men within her are transformed, fighting, heaving, thrusting to fend her away. She has risen on a huge wave now, clear of the ship. Then follows the quick banging of oars flung down to the rowlocks. A moment later, diving down a hollow, she has started on her way.

The full force of those mighty waves that the mail steamer rides with such ease is only now apparent. Once a couple of hundred yards distant, the glimpses of the lifeboat are but intermittent. Time after time, she rises from the depths into view, lurching and climbing, the oars flashing all together, but striking the water only when they may. The parent vessel is in motion after her now, manœuvring with either screw to give the shelter of its lee to the tiny tossing dot upon the ocean.

The moments that follow are vague. There is a white speck by the side of the strange steamer that leaps at times to the level of its decks. Then it becomes evident that the bridge of the troubled craft is empty of humanity. The white speck is no longer there. But midway between the two vessels is an object that resembles a centipede, its legs struggling hard to bear it over the wave tops.

Down below, the engine bell is sounding in constant message as the great hull draws nearer. The boat is quite close by now, with a knot of closely packed figures in Basque caps in the midst

of its crew. A squall blacker than the rest is upon the water now. There are some who have hurried to the weather side of the deck to estimate its force. A spell of howling wind and of garments flapping in a bewildering cloud is sufficient. And as they return the boat is heaving and dipping within a hundred yards of the ship's side. From above comes a shouting, deepened and strengthened by the megaphone, and the officer in the lifeboat's stern has waved in response.

The blocks are hanging in readiness by the water's edge. A mountain of water sends the boat in a dizzy upward slant almost upon them. But the outstretched hands have failed to reach them; the small craft has fallen downwards and away. Now she is up again, and this time there are men clinging like leeches to the swinging tackle, while the oars come whirling over to strike and thrust at the threatening wall of iron. The next moment an upward stream of men is upon the rope ladder, the feeble movements of one or two of those in Basque caps aided by the sailors of the liner. Then the trampling of feet sounds from above once more. The lifeboat, stripped of all her crew but two, has risen from the waters, to fall into sudden quietude as she mounts in the air. And at that moment the full rhythmic pulsation of the giant screws bursts out in stirring chant. Full speed ahead!

But the drama is not yet complete. A third vessel, unnoticed amidst the stir, has been drawing near all the while. Innocent of the responsibility of mails, she ploughs her way towards the derelict, scenting salvage and prey. In vain, however.

Ere the troubled horizon has closed upon the scene, she is steaming away alone upon the waters !

The ship's grouser has been robbed of a grievance. Breakfast has been held back in readiness in the white-and-gold saloon. As he hastens to his table the words of protest die, still-born, on his lips. He has bethought himself of an opportunity, nevertheless :

" We shall be late at every port now," he murmurs. " Confound the Company ! "

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PERFECT DAY.

BY rights you should awaken in the morning as fresh as a lark. But this is clumsy—of course, there are no larks at sea! No, once again, as you were! There are no larks in the sky above the sea.

This seems to work out all right. Nevertheless, lest further trouble should arise, let us abandon feathers and take to fins. What you really should do is to wake up as fresh as a porpoise—that delightfully smooth and shiny creature which slides in and out of the water in its much improved switchback railway act. If I were not an author I would be a porpoise every day of the week, and specialize in attractive curves and moist tobogganings.

It is true that porpoises do not sit up at night playing bridge, or telling girls on the boat-deck all about their eyes and noses—and girls, mind you, who know all about these things for themselves! They do not smoke a number of cigars, nor even swallow that final whisky which—like a solitary maiden on a stile—calls out for a companion to sit beside it at the very last moment. At least, if they do these things, there is nothing said about them in the books on porpoises.

Even so, you may perpetrate a limited amount

of this sort of thing and yet wake up as fresh as a porpoise—or, since it is our grim determination to be completely accurate in this chapter—as fresh as a porpoise appears on the outside, because he may have his inner troubles, after all.

For a proper beginning of a perfect day you should be a lover of the dew which sits upon the ship and dies upon the sea. Having instructed your steward to bring tea at an early hour, you may toy pleasantly with that, a banana or so, and, positively indispensable, a cigarette.

Perhaps the sun is just rising and the sky and sea beginning to shimmer in pink and gold. Perhaps the whole affair throbs with colour until it is fit to burst. And then perhaps it does burst—into open flame, as the tremendous sun leaps out of the waters. One ought to be conscious of nothing else. The spectacle should thrill one to the very marrow.

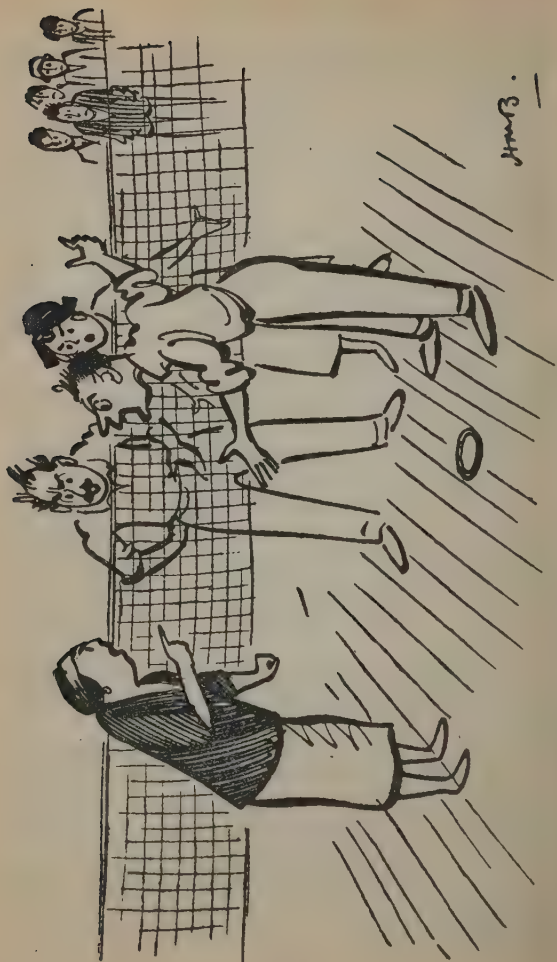
So it does; but there is *no* reason to forget the tea, and the banana and the cigarette. They complete the sacrament, believe me.

Doubtless the world must be rich in earnest people in eager search of the most profitable way of spending a day on board ship. This demand does honour to their spirit. In order to meet it I have taken the trouble to compile—from the most reliable reference works on the subject—a complete time-table. This should prove a short cut to exaltation in the case of those who surrender themselves to its maxims unflinchingly. Here it is :—

6 a.m.—When roused by the steward open your eyelids with a snap resounding with the joy of

morn. Perform the tea, banana, and cigarette ceremony, already explained. Count the flying-fish, and watch them change from grey to silver as the sun rises.

- 6.20 a.m.—Emerge from your cabin in dressing-gown and pyjamas. (For hints on style in pyjamas, see page —, but, of course, I don't know the number of the page yet. How could I, considering that I am writing this before the book is printed? In this instance it is awkward, but the old customs of the trade must be loyally followed.)
- 6.22 a.m.—Walk twice round the deck.
- 6.27 a.m.—Proceed to gymnasium on boat-deck. Should you possess the pack instinct, you will, joined by others, strike the deck with whichever part of your body is commanded by the instructor. If a lone wolf or a Bolschevic, you will ride the electric horse with solitary bumps, or will do punchball, or scull that immovable racing-shell with the sliding seat.
- 6.55 a.m.—Return to cabin. Put on bathing costume.
- 7 a.m.—Proceed to swimming bath. Survey scene. Offer to take charge of ladies' dressing-gowns.
- 7.10 a.m.—Having waited for the moment when everybody is looking, dive in. Swim.
- 7.40 a.m.—Lie on the deck to dry in the sun. Conversation with other bathers. Explain to them what you could do at their age.
- 8 a.m.—Proceed to cabin. Have hot fresh water sluice.
- 8.20 a.m.—Dress.



11.10 to 11.58 a.m.—“Argue concerning legitimate strokes.”

- 8.45 a.m.—Stroll twice round deck.
- 9 a.m.—Breakfast.
- 9.45 a.m.—Proceed to deck-chair. Conversation or book; perhaps both. If possible, read aloud some extracts from Browning or Ibsen to the very last thing in sausage profiteers, or endeavour to interest him in the rise and fall of the Vorticist school.
- 10.20 a.m.—Visit the dogs and cats travelling in charge of the butcher.
- 10.30 a.m.—Play at game of deck-quoits.
- 11 a.m.—Take ticket for sweep.
- 11.5 a.m.—Play deck-tennis.
- 11.10 to 11.58 a.m.—Argue concerning legitimate strokes. Observe with interest the expression on the faces of the people waiting to play.
- 12 noon—Find out who has won sweep.
- 12.10 p.m.—Wait for him in smoking-room.
- 12.15 p.m.—Cocktail.
- 12.30 p.m.—Lunch.
- 1.30 p.m.—Take a book to your cabin.
- 2.30 p.m.—Wake up.
- 2.35 p.m.—Play bridge. (See note under heading, "The Inner Meaning of the Revoke.")
- 4 p.m.—Tea.
- 4.30 p.m.—Deck-tennis.
- 5.15 p.m.—Descend to the lower deck for game of shuffleboard.
- 5.35 p.m.—Walk three times round deck.
- 5.45 p.m.—Watch the approach of sunset.
- 6.10 p.m.—Cocktail.
- 6.30 p.m.—Dress.
- 7 p.m.—Dine.

8 p.m.—Engage in agreeable conversation on deck.

9 p.m.—Dance.

10 p.m.—Bridge.

11 p.m.—Bunk.

11.5 p.m.—Snore.

This may be taken as a fair sample in the way of days. You can add to it indefinitely, if you like. On the other hand, if aged, decrepit, or a complete slacker, you can pick and choose, and, in short, merely take it *à la carte*.



8 p.m.—“Engage in agreeable conversation on deck.”

CHAPTER IX.

A NIGHT IN PORT.

IT is unlikely that everybody will agree, but to my mind there are few things more pleasant than being anchored on a fine, still night in port. Remaining tied alongside a wharf is a very different thing. Also, the port itself should, for preference, be a tropical one—or, at all events, be sufficiently near to that standing to be roofed with a deep violet—instead of a black—sky. You possess a fairly ample choice of these on the South American route, as you perceive on studying that most complete and carefully compiled guide at the end of this volume—the final jewel in this glittering literary pendant!

Just to be in such a spot seems to provide the most easily won sense of adventure. Moreover, everything is provided for you; you need do so little for yourself. You may begin by leaning over the side, quite an easy thing to do. Then you may listen to the occasional faint gurgling of the waters, and watch the lights of the launches as they glide past, to the accompaniment of the churning and threshing little screws.

The white-capped quartermaster is at the gangway, a little worn by some hours' fending off of persistent sellers of picture-postcards, feather flowers, embroidery, and other enterprising but uninfluential merchants. Near him a row of

stewards, faithful to the fine old custom of the port, lean over the side of a lower deck, and at long intervals exchange a few words with a man in a boat below.

The latter is a dealer in fur, feathers, and fruit. You can dimly make out the group of tiny, chained monkeys, the larger company of similarly anchored parrots, and the great heap of oranges that would be golden, were it day instead of night. Now and again a basket, filled with the fruit, is hauled up along the ship's side, to sink down again empty but for a silver coin. But just for the moment business in monkeys and parrots is dull, and these creatures look correspondingly dejected. They may be ruminating on their foliage homes, which they have lost for ever.

On deck there are far more uniforms than one has ever seen on the ocean. The captain has become completely human. He is reclining in a chair in the midst of a group of passengers, telling them more or less authentic stories about the nature of the place and its inhabitants. (You need not think that a captain is necessarily any more truthful than any other man just because he wears three gold bands on his arm, and the best cap on board the ship !)

As for the chief engineer, years of care seem to have fallen from his face, and for once he seems to have forgotten that the vessel has any works inside her. The doctor has been discussing health regulations with the visiting medical officer of the port, apparently a somewhat trying affair. But the wrinkles have now smoothed themselves away from his brow, and he is much as usual.

The chief officer and the purser are invisible. It is not their night off. Very much the contrary. The first is heavily involved in matters of cargo; the second is up to the eyes in accounts and the affairs of new passengers. The Marconi operators, on the other hand, seem very much at their ease, knowing with content that in port the chances of that worrying buzzing are small.

In the social hall the ship's orchestra is playing. If you think that this is the only music happening on board, it is merely because you have not explored the ship. In the second-class quarters, aft, a French comic songstress, on the way to venture her fate on the boards of Buenos Aires, is warbling with considerable *verve*, and at the opposite end of the vessel the homely notes of a concertina accompany the thudding of emigrants' feet.

There is a group of lighters on either side of the vessel, in which men work and haul in the light of an electric flare which beats down, cutting them fiercely out from the shadows beyond. They seem inhabitants of a different world, these, mysterious toilers of the night who pass in and out of the gloom and glare as the winches rattle and whine,



and the loads come swinging and twisting up in the air, to find their resting-places somewhere deep down in the holds.

One of the barges lies a little farther off than the rest. It is littered with dark recumbent forms. They might be the dead on a battlefield, but they are sleepers, who will wake to work another day—and perhaps lounge for three or four days after that—for the barge has been emptied of cargo and its work is done.

Beyond, from out the purple pool of night twinkles a brilliant band of lights. The sparkling close-set jewels are the illumination of a lesser liner. To right and left some feebler and smaller clusters of light, with a line of bolder sheen here and there, show where the cargo vessels lie at rest. Not completely at rest, however, for across the dark comes now and then the faint drumming of the distant winches.

Beyond, again, show the lights of the town, long lines of brilliance low down by the water's edge, and perpendicular lines, rising up like lantern hung masts, where the roads climb, staggering the dimly seen mountains. Now and again, near the water's edge green-white flashes occur in some strange, fairylike fashion. In reality they are completely unconcerned with any romance whatever, for they are merely the result of an electric tramcar or two passing the standards.

One can see very little of the mountains over there, and nothing at all of the palms and flowers, and of the green waves of forest beyond. But their presence makes itself strongly and subtly felt. One can feel them, smell them. And there

are the sounds of the town which travel out to sea now and then—the booming of deep church bells and a locomotive whistle or two, the shrillness mellowed by the intervening space of water.

Fairly frequently, too, there arrives a visitor abounding in mute eloquence. Then, a great moth will come fluttering like a leisurely bird into the liner's blaze of light, and will settle on a deck-house, showing a vast extent of handsome, mottled wing. Very soft messengers from the shore, these, who have come at the peril of their lives, for few enough of them return.

There is the thudding clank of an oar in its row-lock. Presently a little boat glides into the circle of light spread by the ship. It travels with the slow deliberation which marks the advent of people incapable of bountiful *largesse*. Two men are rowing stolidly; a small huddled group shows darkly in the stern. Steerage passengers these, humble folk, yet whose adventures in their own way are greater than those of the rest.

And so passes the evening. It is only the great hull which is sleeping; all the rest is very much alive. You had better make the most of it while you can. At dawn the great screw will throb again, and the rushing waters will begin once more their hissing refrain along the giant sides.

If you rise early enough you may see the dwindling town and the fading mountains. It will be another atmosphere then. The land will have lost its intimacy. It will be aloof, secretive, and rather strange. It is best to make the most of the moments while you can.

Of course, there are spots where all this mysterious

glamour loses nothing from being seen from within, so to speak. One of the most prominent of these is undoubtedly Rio de Janeiro.

Rio is a city of sheer enchantment. Were there to be a competition in the matter of beautiful towns it is difficult to imagine one which would wrest the laurels from the Brazilian capital. And if Rio be a sun by day, it is the queenliest of moons by night.

Perhaps one of the most poetic of all Brazilian romantic fancies has been expended on the illumination of this wonderful city. When the sun has sunk behind the mountains, and the gold, crimson, purple, and mauve of the dying day in the sky has sunk into the warm blue-grey of early night, then, without an instant's warning, all at once the city bursts into myriads of lights from the one end to the other. At one moment the wondrous town has been slumbering in its soft, beautiful tints; at the next its boulevards facing the sea, its roads that climb to the mountains, and its vivid central quarters have burst into a close and glittering tracery of illumination.

The whole thing has the effect of fireworks, but infinitely softer and more entrancing; and, of course, the cause of all this is purely prosaic. Merely that the lights of the entire capital can be switched on by the same hand at the same moment! But the effect of this transformation has to be seen to be realized.

CHAPTER X.

AFFECTIONS AFLOAT.

IT is time to abandon land- and sea-scapes in favour of something which lies nearer to the hand. There are many problems affecting ship-board life. Here is one of them :

Should an engaged girl travel alone on a steamer ?

This, actually, should be printed in very large letters. It sounds very like a poster put out by a weekly paper designed for the home. The sort of thing that invariably follows such interrogative bombshells as "Does the cave man appeal to women ?" "Should maiden ladies wear mauve stockings ?" to say nothing of other topics which have proved fruitful bait for correspondence.

But, after all, should she ? Well, why not ? It is true that instances have occurred when a girl has boarded the ship as one man's betrothed, and has left it engaged to another. Again, why should she not ? A milliner, or hattist—or whatever the right term may be for one who crowns the locks of ladies—will change a green toque for one with blue feathers. At least, so they tell me. They tell me again that few self-respecting women will wear a hat for more than one season. Whereas many people still hold the theory that a husband is supposed to last for a lifetime. You will see, there-

fore, how much more important it is to change a prospective husband than a hat.

Now, a voyage is an important test, not necessarily of constancy, but of taste. The beanstalk of Jack was a child in growth compared to that of the intimacy engendered by sitting on the same deck, watching the same waters, playing the same games, and diving into the same swimming bath. A year's acquaintance ashore will teach you a certain amount about a person's exterior; after a week aboard you will have a knowledge both inside and out—even down to the intimate secret—observe the careful masculine gender!—concerning the exact whereabouts of his liver.

Female affections seem apt to be stirred by circumstances which have no direct value to the heart. There is no doubt that the boat-deck, the daisy-field of stars, the phosphorus glowing out from the white foam by the ship's side, the caress of light, fanning airs—all these, and much beyond, produce what the propagandist loves to term an atmosphere.

It is precisely that atmosphere which will tell—one way or the other. You can make up your mind that it will influence those women whose affections resemble the habits of a puppy dog—I mean one of those animals of a tentative nature that cannot quite make up its mind where it wants to sit down, and that scratches about and revolves in half a dozen circles before it finally plops. On the other hand, there is the simple-minded girl who keeps her loyal eyes immutably fixed on the darning of one man's socks, and none other but his.

I do happen to know of a case—not quite on all fours with this latter—in which a girl did me the honour of taking me into her confidence. I proclaim this in no boastful spirit, since every fresh-faced flapper knows that no man of any real consequence in the matter of sex is ever made the receptacle of such a trust.

It was in the early stages of a homeward voyage from Buenos Aires. In fact, being a charmingly impetuous person, with a good deal on her mind, she broached the subject before even the yellow of the River Plate estuary had yielded to the deeper blue of the Southern Atlantic.

It was a pretty little story. She had been staying with some friends, who owned an estancia, and had galloped across the wide *campo* to her heart's delight. Enter the man—the manager of the estate! A person—well, merely from the social point of view, just a little—that is to say, not quite, quite altogether—in fact, his parlour tricks did not come off. And his accent! At times, believe me, only at times—well, you couldn't get away from a very occasional twang.

“But a *man*! Such simple power and strength! When I look at some of these people . . .! You could lean on him, rest on him—and he would carry you through the world. Not a big world, because, you know, his own is rather small. But he cares—and he *can* care! Life would be so safe—so safe!”

There was no regular engagement, it appeared, merely an understanding. She had been a little doubtful. Frankly, he might not fit in with all the people at home. There was that superficial

difference. It would not all be smooth sailing. But when they parted, something had happened. It was—inexplicable. She was almost certain then that she, too, cared. And—she thought so now!

Then fell the thunderbolt. She wanted advice: she demanded advice! In short, what about it?

Now, this was a very serious situation in which to find oneself placed. Conceive the mountain of responsibility hurled by that slender hand! If I were really to be the arbiter of the fate of these two, there was so much involved. There was the making or marring of a happy union; on the other hand, the preventing or permitting of disaster.

And, much more than that. What about the possible family? There might easily be eight children, sixty-four grandchildren, five hundred and twelve great-grandchildren and—in fact, that moment was a vital one. On my decision might easily depend the fact as to whether England would possess an extra town or not in a century's time!

No wonder that I gazed in silence for a long while at the sailor who was stolidly and meticulously painting a ventilator in spotless white. The fortunate man was completely ignorant of what lay in the balance so near him!

At last I spoke; something had to be done. Perhaps you want to know what I said? I shall not tell you. You need only know one thing. They were words such as any good and wise man might have used. You can easily guess them for yourselves.

The girl departed, speaking words of deep gratitude. She was quite a nice girl.

"I shall never forget this hour," she said, or rather murmured, because the sailor was still quite near. "One day I shall be able to thank you—yes, we shall both thank you—as you deserve!"

(On reflection, this seems to give a good deal away, confound it! I mean, of course, concerning the particular kind of the riches of my advice.)

Well, that seemed all right. Guiding the destinies of others is comfortable and warming work at all times.

It was a lively trip. People danced all night, played all day, and there seemed very few dull moments. It was not until the violet mountains of Madeira were fading into the horizon astern that I found an opportunity of broaching the vital subject to the girl.

"Well, what about it?" I asked, using, I flattered myself, precisely the right tone.

"What about *what*?" she demanded.

This, again, was embarrassing. One could not very well blurt out "Your choice—your love—your life!" to a girl who, however confidential, was a comparative stranger. So I had to content myself with a gesture in the direction in which Argentina might be supposed to be.

"Your young man over there," I explained.

No gleam rose up in her eye, or anywhere else about her. On the contrary, her jaw fell, quite a long way. Then she made a grimace which was positively rude.

"So you remember *that*!" she exclaimed. "What utter nonsense! You don't mean to say you took me seriously—just because I was so bored

when I got on the ship ? But how extraordinary ! Please forget it ! Let's get up a four for tennis."

As I have said, she was a nice girl. But I don't think she would have fitted in with mere eggs and bacon for breakfast.

You may judge from this how dangerous it might be to attempt to chaperone an attractive girl on a voyage. I should not recommend the situation to any bachelor or grass-widower. Once I slumped into it myself, at the urgent request of an anxious father and mother.

The lady thoroughly enjoyed herself. She had an excellent and amusing voyage. But there came a time when a strict sense of duty impelled me to intervene.

"Now," I began brightly, "for a little talk about my—er—in fact, my job, on board."

"That's bridge, isn't it ?" she answered, equally brightly.

"Only in my spare time," I protested. "The rest is devoted to your interests. You know—you *don't* know who everybody is on board ship. You can't be too careful !"

"I don't try to be," she replied—I almost fear with some flippancy.

"Now there's that—the one with the pointed moustaches. Well, isn't it just a little—I won't say conspicuous—but something getting on that way ? He *may* be all right, but he might be anybody—no one seems to have known him before he came on board. There's something about his appearance, too. How do you know he hasn't forged a cheque, or robbed some widows and orphans ? Remember, he drinks champagne every

night ! Now, do keep your eyes open, and your head on straight ! ”

“ I will, ” she said.

But she did not. She married the man. Exactly three years and a half afterwards I met the pair of them in a very large motor car. There were two nurses and two babies behind.

She beamed and gushed. He scowled in silence. Obviously she had given the thing away !

He had turned out to be not only rich, but completely desirable.

But the thing which, as I fled, haunted me most was the mute reproof in those babies’ eyes !

And this was the result of what one supposed was a friendly act ! Compare the two incidents of this chapter, and the world reels about one’s giddy head. Curious things happen at sea.

The sole moral, I think, is that one never knows what is coming next.

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT HAPPENED AT BARBADOES.

CURIOUSLY enough, in order to get in the only call at a British port on what may be called the main lines to South America, you must start from New York instead of Southampton.

The ships are very similar, most attractive vessels. In one respect they differ—not a very important one. The powers that be in their wisdom have decreed that the steamers leaving Southampton shall be known as “A” boats (all the names beginning with A), while those leaving New York are known in a similar fashion as the “V” boats.

The reason for this is that A comes before B, and V before W. B stands for Bass, Burgundy, and Bordeaux; W for wood alcohol, wanton waste, and woe.

Perhaps there is some slight touch of exaggeration in this. Outward-bound from New York, once past that fine, upstanding statue of Liberty, you become free to treat your inside as though it belonged to you. And what wonderful reflections surge up then through the first descending little cataract, which emanated from the grape, and not from the inside of a chemist’s dry skull!

Moreover, you will see Barbadoes—that island of coal-black humanity, and of flowers that a

thousand rainbows all put together could not rival. Ah, an alluring spot, with its bridges, festooned roads, and its "green swizzle," which hastens to the head of the heedless.

There is a pirates' castle in Barbadoes. I have motored ten miles from the town to see it. So you see I am talking of what I know. Now, this pirates' castle was just where a pirates' castle ought to have been. It lay back from the glittering sands of a wondrous little bay. There were the hills behind, the shade of palms, the brilliance of flowering trees. . . .

No, nothing but a pirates' castle could have stood there. One could almost see the iron-bound chests bursting with gold and silver, the heaps of casks, the mounds of silks and satins—all just lying about anyhow on the hot ground. And, good heavens, yes! There was the bold and truculent shadow of a Morgan, or Sharp, or Sawkins, dragging a beauteous female form by the hair across those shining sands—no, *two* protesting female forms—one in either hand.

It was the most perfectly piratical atmosphere that I have ever breathed. And this in spite of a lengthy acquaintance with bazaars and income-tax officials.

Unfortunately, the castle itself was perfectly unruined. It scarcely suggested a castle. It was the sort of square house which one's grandfather might have built, had he lived in Barbadoes. But the caretaker assured us that we had come to the right place. He showed us the pirates' wine-cellar and furniture. Finally, he showed us the portrait of the pirate himself, in mid-nineteenth

century costume. Next to it was the portrait of a lady in ringlets, the pirate's wife, we were told.

The pirate's wife ! What respectable rover ever had such a thing ? Ladies, yes—by the dozen—but a single wife, the pair of them completely unchaperoned, how could this be ? However, there remained a ray of hope.

“How did he kill her ?” we asked.

You will never believe what the ebony wretch told us. He had the effrontery to say that the couple had travelled home to England some time in the eighteen sixties. So this contemptible fellow had not even cultivated the weed-killer instinct ! And they call these decadent days !

It was in the midst of these reflections that the miserable black, in the very vulgar phrase of to-day, put the lid on it. He told us that the place was to be let, furnished, for fifty pounds a year. It was most remarkably cheap at the price ; but after that we gave up looking for skulls and dried bloodstains, and simply came away.

Now, can anyone tell me what was the meaning of this game ? A place is either a pirates' castle, or it isn't. There is nothing between that I know of. Was an enterprising house agent at the bottom of it, or the automobile interest ? Or was it a mere jest, as differentiated from that completely different thing, a joke ?

Yes, but let me tell you something. The affair may have cast a shadow on our visit to Barbadoes ; but so it does on Barbadoes itself. It is a stain on the island. Let the authorities see to it without delay that it be removed—for their own sakes ! Otherwise a certain party who viewed this alleged

castle *will* rent it for fifty pounds a year. And then the inhabitants of Barbadoes will yearn and pray for the return of that pirate—even at his worst—who may, or may not, have infested the spot.

I have another bone to pick with Barbadoes. I want to gnaw it as white as the teeth of its people. It is concerned with the difficulties of disembarkation and going aboard ship.

On this particular occasion I had taken the tiller of a shore-going boat, manned by Barbadian ebony. It was a fine performance, I think; and feeling of a curious, roving turn of mind I steered the small craft in circles round various anchored steamers, while the whites of the blacks' eyes swelled like waxing moons—perhaps in admiration of the feat.

Having, as you have seen, thoroughly inspected Barbadoes and the pirates' castle, the time came to listen to the gentle hooted warnings of the liner. Once again I sat in the stern with the tiller line in each hand, the blacks grinning wide encouragement. There was an unusually fine flowering tree near the breakwater, and I pulled a line in order to approach it. If you will believe it, that boat took not the slightest notice! Her bow was pointing for the liner, and, despite some frantic tugs, it continued to point for the liner.

A look over the shoulder flooded the situation with an amazing light. The rudder had been made fast by means of a rope! A discreet silence pervaded the boat: the men appeared intent on looking for fish in the waters, or birds in the sky.

But the occupants of a passing boat were less subdued.

“Dat’s all right, sah ! Doan’ you trouble, sah ! Good boat, dat, an’ goin’ de right road !”

Perhaps it was kindly meant—an endeavour to soften the downfall of the usurper. Of course, one had to strain one’s mouth into a grin ; but there came floating up some suitable and bitter companion pictures—Napoleon on the “Bellerophon” ; William the Wicked chipping pine trees in Holland ; Horatio Bottomley ; poor Carpentier !

And these were only just a few. Barbadoes seemed a huge trap. So I left the island, and went out into the blue ocean, where the far-famed flocks of fleet-finned flying-fish flit.

CHAPTER XII.

A LITTLE LOCAL COLOUR.

EVEN on the mere water which exists between South America and Southampton you may occasionally get an insight into the frame of mind which demands the cream of this world's milk, and gets it.

"None but fools and monks ignore the comforts of this short life," said an Argentine friend, who owns some dozens of leagues of land and sufficient cattle to feed London for three weeks. I have not the least idea how many this would require, but it must be a great many.

He acted up to his theory on board ship. He had engaged a double set of *cabines de luxe*, by which means he had the choice of two sitting-rooms in which to repose, to say nothing of two bedrooms and an extra bathroom, which, I imagine, must have been the occasional haunt of his valet.

But this was only so far as his actual premises went. There was also the matter of food. This had been thoughtfully considered. Was there not a Jersey cow within call in order that daily milk might be had straight from the cow which had come straight from the estancia? Were there not chickens and hens from the same place, and tender young lambs—alas! with very small space left them now in which to frisk away their last young

days—chosen parts of which would one day steam on plates in the saloon ?

He was a very good fellow indeed. His donation to the sports fund left the rest of the committee subdued, shrinking and pallid, and he distinguished himself in the subsequent contests. He would buy up most of the numbers in the sweeps, and, whether he won or lost, would content himself with the same genial smile and the remark, "Muy bien : *eso es*."

His bedroom steward must have regarded that cherished vision of a public-house on land as having leaped forward several weeks from the horizon; and, as to the *maitre d'hotel*, no doubt he already saw himself peering complacently at the Thames through the wide windows of the Savoy, chief of every menial in and out of sight.

Now, my Argentine friend is one of a type—and a very pleasant, courteous and friendly type it is, as a matter of fact. Perhaps they are remotely addicted to painting the lily; sometimes they go through life with the splash of a racing motor-boat. But, if we *must* have extremes, I imagine that it is better than sitting in a stagnant pool.

Of course, there are other types, not all quite so genial. There was a plutocrat, for instance, from one of the more northern republics of the continent, who had also engaged a *cabine de luxe*—a single suite only—in order to instal his small boy in a Parisian school. The youngster had a habit of blotting the table cover in the sitting-room with ink, and the steward ventured to remark on this.

The consequences left the unfortunate man

aghast. The father sprang to his feet, seized the inkpot and, twirling round on his toes, made a neat line of ink splashes all round the white and gold walls.

"There!" he exclaimed. "I have paid for this cabin and I shall do what I like in it! The company can send me the bill for the extras!"

He really said far more than that, and much more frothily and incoherently; but that is what his proclamation amounted to, boiled down.

This performance, however, must not be taken as a typical one. Very much the reverse. The average South American traveller is the soul of courtesy. It is merely that all nations and continents possess occasional eccentric beings who employ odd means to assert their rights. There are some who employ murder as a mere retort, just because they happen to be short of an epigram at the time. Others hunger-strike, if they can collect a sufficient crowd to watch them do it; while, as you have seen, yet others content themselves with slinging ink.

This reference to nations and their representatives leads one to another topic.

When an Ambassador or Minister happens to travel in a liner, etiquette demands that the flag of his country should be hoisted aloft as the vessel enters and leaves each port on the route. Usually these high officials bring with them their own piece of bunting for this purpose. If they do not, something has to be done about it, for custom is rigid on this point.

On one occasion, when travelling from Buenos Aires to Rio, it was announced that the Minister

Plenipotentiary of—(shall we call the Republic Lorrانيا?)—accredited to Rio, was among the passengers. The Minister proved a charming acquisition. He had represented his country in many parts of the world, spoke English and French with a quite unusual fluency, and his conversation, manners, and bridge were all that could be desired.

At the time I had been entrusted by a grateful but absent-minded government with a small mission. The captain, having knowledge of this, came to consult with me on this particular Minister's case.

"He is the Lorranian Minister, isn't he?" he asked.

I assured him that he was. The captain looked pensive.

"Then that's infernally awkward," he mused. "He hasn't brought his flag with him, and we haven't one on the ship. We never go near Lorrانيا, you see. There's nothing for it: we shall have to make one, that's all."

I congratulated the captain on this most proper piece of enterprise, and, with much trouble, a beautiful new Lorranian flag was cut out, and its colours waved proudly aloft as we entered each port. Filled with enthusiasm, I took the Minister's little daughter to the boat-deck in order that she might take delight in her country's emblem.



She clapped her hands most prettily, and vowed that the vessel was now a part of Lorrانيا, which, I assured her, was perfectly correct.

Three or four days after landing at Rio I was travelling by train, in company with the British Minister, up into the mountain resort of Petropolis, when the Lorrانian Minister joined us. He was an old friend of Sir Arthur's.

"A most attractive man," I remarked when, on the conclusion of the journey, the Lorrانian had driven off. "A success as a Minister, one imagines."

Sir Arthur stared. "As a *what*?"

"I mean the Lorrانian Minister."

"*That's* not the Lorrانian Minister! He *was*; but retired some years ago. He happens to live in Petropolis."

I explained what had occurred. It was just a little hobby, it appeared. Once a Minister, always a Minister. Yes, but what would the captain and the sail-maker have said about it? However, they will never know, unless they happen to read these pages. Let us hope they never will! In any case, the Lorrانian was such a pleasant man that he richly deserved any little extra attentions of the kind.

There is one feature which, I think, distinguishes the South American route from all the rest. This is the pleasant little brown leather tube of the dice-box, also the squares of bone or ivory which it holds.

Perhaps the dice-box has a sinister sound. In "period" books one reads breathlessly of the throwing of "mains." One may conjure up the

picture of the young man in powdered wig and silken clothes, standing by a half-opened door, gazing back with straining eyes for the last time on the home he has gambled away. You can see the dice that have done it, lying eloquently on the carpet, flung there in despair! And you can see the other players—a little grim, contemptuous, uncomfortable, or pitying.

On the whole, it is a desolate and instructive picture. But it does not stand for the life of to-day. To-day, as gambling instruments, horses and cards survive; but dice have dropped out. They are not missed. We have so many newer things to play with—stocks and shares, exchange, rubber, and all the other immoralities.

Thus, on the South American route, all that you stand to lose by the use of these dreaded dice is the price of a lemon-squash or a whisky and soda. Of course, in a gathering of half a dozen people you may lose the price of half a dozen of either, but even this should not necessarily wreck your home—that is to say, if you have felt justified in paying for your passage.

Perhaps you will be surprised to hear that these dice are purely benevolent agents. At all events, their purpose is definitely moral. They flutter their little white square wings in angelic but firm opposition to the habit of “treating.”

There is no doubt that many men imbibe more than is good for them not from any love of strong liquor at all. It is an inborn sense of justice which occasionally leads heads and heels astray. It is a powerful sense of equity which ordains that a man gets nothing for nothing, and very little for six-

pence. If seven men with seven malts were to swig for half a year—well, the one who had not contributed his proper share of the payment would find a possible gain in girth more than counter-balanced by a corresponding loss of self-esteem.

In fact, these dice work against the evils of a compulsory return of hospitality. Two thirsty men swallow a whisky and soda, or a lemon-squash. Very well then, the beverage is at the cost of him who loses at one of the innumerable games of dice in vogue. The winner does not say “thank you”—or if he does, he does not mean it! He simply drinks in triumph, and the episode is at an end!

So you see the splendid work achieved by a mere leathern vessel, and these dear little white and painted squares. They are the practical emblems of a true righteousness. It should be made a criminal offence for a prohibitionist ever to be found without them!

CHAPTER XIII.

CUSTOMS AND CURIOSITIES.

THE confirmed "grouser" is something of an institution. He is by no means without his uses. You may not always agree with him. But this is all for the best in the worst possible of worlds, from his point of view. Were you to sympathize his pessimistic enthusiasm would be damped, and his even flow of complaint partially dammed.

The "grouser" is—must be—a man of some loquacity. He loves to flop down into a neighbouring deck chair, probably just at the moment when you are absorbed in following Wells into one of his many new worlds. It is no use. You have to come back to your own, or, rather, his. He will pin you to your seat with wordy shafts, just as an entomologist transfixes a captured butterfly.

"Just the same blue sky this morning," he will begin. "Beastly monotonous, isn't it?"

It is unnecessary to insert any of the replies here, because he ignores them completely.

"Kidneys and bacon this morning smelt like a dead rat. Tasted like one? No, I almost wish they had. A good dead rat would have been a plover's egg to 'em. And *tea*! Don't talk to me about *tea*! Bilge water warmed up in the engine-room boiler. Never knew such a ship!"



THE "GROUSER."

"Just the same blue sky this morning," he will begin.

"Anyhow, I gave the purser a bit of my mind last night—told him what they did on the Green Funnel Line. Idiot wouldn't believe it. Of course, he wouldn't. Couldn't understand it, you see. An ordinary cabin boy on that line knows exactly five hundred times as much as the captain of this ship."

"Now, on the Green Funnel Line they're not above looking after their passengers. I'll give you an instance. As soon as the weather begins to get warm, every morning—every morning mind you!—just about this time they bring round ices—as many ices as you want, too. What's that, steward? Ices? Never eat 'em. And if I did, I'd swim a long way before I tackled those. There's a shorthorn bull on board—try 'em on him, and see what happens. He's insured."

"Beastly draughty here, isn't it? Now, if they'd had this glassed in—glass doesn't cost much; but it makes all the difference between comfort and the other thing. Do you think they'd take the trouble? But they take your money all right."

"That infernal deck steward, too! Goodness knows where he's put my chair this morning! That's why I've had to come and sit here—of all places. Oh, no—it's quite all right, you needn't move. Don't mind *who* I talk to, so long as I can get something off my chest about this beastly ship."

It would be curious to witness this particular type of "grouser's" home life. But one never seems to. I have a powerful suspicion that he breakfasts on chilly bacon, dines in the middle of

the day on good solid neck of mutton, and sups sumptuously on a poached egg sitting on a slab of haddock. There is no reason whatever why he should not—except that he tells one so little about it! After all, there need be no particular harm in a person who talks Claridges, and eats cabbages!

Of course, there may exist hardships in plenty on the sea to-day. At any moment some catastrophe may occur. Even on the most beautiful day, when the sky vouchsafes not the faintest hint of disaster, the omelette may turn out flabby, and the saddle of mutton overdone. The bread-crumbs surrounding the pheasant may prove of too moist, or even of too arid, a consistency, and one never knows when a bottle of claret may not be corked.

All these things are possible. If there be any comforting corrective of this devastating thought, let me hasten to provide it. Believe me, affairs were even worse a little time ago.

Listen to the catering arrangements on the good ship "The Delight," Captain Andrew Merrick, which sailed on this very route as recently as 1589! The account may be accepted as absolutely authentic, since it is vouched for by that wonderful old chronicler, Richard Hakluyt. This is the narrative of those on board concerning their northward voyage from the far south of the continent:



“So the 22 at night we departed with 14,000 dried penguins, not being able to fetch the rest, and shaped our course for Brazil. Nowe our captaine rated our victuals . . . so the allowance was two ounces and a half of meale for a man a day, and to have so twise a weeke, so that 5 ounces did serve for a weeke. Three daies a weeke we had oile, three spoonfuls for a man a day, and two dayes in a weeke peason, a pint between 4 men a day, and every day 5 penguins for 4 men, and six quartes of water for 4 men a day. This was our allowance; wherewith (we praise God) we lived, though weakly, and very feeble.”

Now, let us be frank! There is no use in mincing matters. To-day there is probably scarcely a single shipping company which could not provide a better bill of fare. But what a curious set of passengers these must have been! They praised God instead of damning the Company!

The landing arrangements appear to have been utterly inadequate. On no single occasion does a uniformed hotel tout appear to have been on the spot, and nothing met these really unfortunate travellers but swords and arrows. But there is more to come. Listen again, you who dine on seven courses played into your interior by the strains of an orchestra!

“But after we came neere unto the sun, our dried penguins began to corrupt, and there bred in them a most lothsome and ugly worme of an inch long. This worme did so mightily increase, and devour our victuals, that there was in reason no hope now that we should avoid famine, but be devoured of these wicked creatures: there was

nothing that they did not devour only yron excepted, our clothes, boots, shoes, hats, shirts, stockings: and for the ship they did so eat the timbers, as that we greatly feared they would undoe us, by gnawing through the ship's side. Great was the care and diligence of our captaine, master, and company to consume these vermine, but the more we laboured to kill them the more they increased; so that at last we could not sleepe for them, but they would eate our flesh, and bite like mosquitos."

Now, there is organization for you! Really, one begins to grow indignant. There should be limits to the forbearance of a traveller. These people apparently took the whole mismanaged affair as a matter of course, and even seem to have been quite pleased with the captain!

However, these little tourist episodes are instructive, for they show that, bad as things may be now, they were even worse less than three centuries and a half ago!

Anyhow, let us return, even though with reluctance, from that spacious old period to the horrors of to-day. Let us abandon these inconvenient, penguin-bred reptiles to their own occupations. We have to-day some recreations which are almost as strenuous. There is, for instance, bridge.

There are two kinds of bridges on board the average ship. There is the one paced in silence by the captain and his officers. There is the other, below, where the silence, broken merely by the soft flap of the falling cards, is punctuated at intervals of about every five minutes by a racking outburst of row.

Even in the midst of a gale the second scene is seldom as peaceful as the first. For, after all, bridge afloat is much the same as bridge ashore, except for the fact that, unless in port, you never finish a rubber in the same part of the world as you began it!

Beyond this, there is very little difference. You will hear the same arguments, chuckles and occasional upbraidings. Bridge afloat is as much a betrayer of character as anywhere else. It throws the same merciless searchlight on breeding. You may test this for yourself by the simplest means. Employ two revokes, two trummings of your partner's best card and two ignorings of a call—all in the same hand! It may be that your partner will merely twist his silent lips into a wan smile; but I do not know that you have any right to expect to sit opposite any such angel on earth. No, it is by the quality of the censure, or even revilings, that you will have to judge. The richness of the direct evidence will be such as to make it well worth while to put the experiment into operation—not too often! One day I mean to try it, having, to the best of my knowledge, committed these three crimes no more than once apiece so far in a rubber.

The devotees of bridge will go far in their chase of "grand slams." The quest of the Golden Fleece was child's play to it. To my knowledge there were, before the war, four or five arch-experts in this absorbing pastime who would make the trip to Buenos Aires and back for no other reason than to play bridge. Do not imagine for a moment that they were of the "sharper" variety;

very much to the contrary. They were perfectly correct and blameless persons, some of them quite elderly gentlemen, with comfortably filled purses, who would as soon have thought of stealing their steward's trousers as of fleecing an outsider.



No doubt they were wise in their generation. Their theory was to add ozone and the salt of the sea to the lure of spades and hearts, and thus obtain a sort of breezy bridge. Sometimes they looked out to sea, but not often. When playing the rubber game the sight of no mere passing ship or spouting whale would suffice to draw their eyes from the diamonds that blazed before them or the clubs that loomed. Nothing short of a shipwreck would have achieved that!

Naturally it was by the hands they held that they described the voyage. For instance, one would remark, stroking his head reflectively with finger-tips honourably worn by the holding of so much cardboard:

"Rio? Yes, we had a rousing time there! Yes, it was off Rio—no, it was actually in Rio Harbour—that Gorman Feslie—you remember that strong, silent player?—held that extraordinary hand. Ten hearts, with ten times honours! Now, that *was* a day!"

"And"—would eagerly interject another—"it was at Montevideo that Gamhouse revoked, and

Larish Binewood claimed—now, what did he claim? You remember the argument?”

“So it was! So he did! Yes, by gad, I remember! It was at Montevideo. And there was Wenn, such a delightfully ardent and spirited caller! Now, those four fellows ought to have joined our regular party. They showed possibilities—faint, perhaps; but, after all, possibilities——”

And so on. On consideration, why not? A world must be made up of suggestions in spades as well as spyglasses.

CHAPTER XIV.

SPORT AND PASTIMES.

THIS chapter is designed solely for the specialist. Those who refuse to take an interest in the more expansive movements of the human body had much better pass it by ! For it is technical, dealing with the games and sports which keep the limbs of some travellers supple, and prevent those of others from becoming stiffer than the laws of nature and years have intended.

What would be the life of the average English man and woman shorn of those various balls which bump the turf, and arouse triumphal pleasure or pleasurable annoyance in so many millions of souls weekly ?

It sounds a poser. But I can answer it at once ; so can anyone else who has ever travelled on a liner. Now, the only balls which I have ever seen used on a liner are improvised cricket balls, and the medicine ball. Marine cricket having almost died out, we are left with the lone medicine ball—which, in reality, is more a thing of murder than a mere ball in the accepted sense of the word. For the ponderous missile possesses not an ounce of spring in it, and the only object which bounces in this game is the body of the player when it catches him in a part of his frame which did not happen to be tuned to receive it !

No, medicine ball is for very few people beyond those who feel themselves fit enough to stand up to Jack Dempsey for at least one round. Anyone else who makes a hobby of having a rounded rock slung straight towards where his breakfast nestles in false security deserves some pity, and usually earns a certain amount of it.

As for the other games—well, the usual thing has happened. Once more Miss Necessity has been in trouble, and this time she has produced discs instead of spheres. She has substituted deck-quoits and shuffle-board for bowls, and has arranged that the deck golf-course shall be slid, and not bounced over. The nearest approach to bagatelle is, I suppose, bull-board—a minor and vexing game, generally entailing missing the right numbers on a marked board by means of tossed discs, which make an annoying noise. There is also bucket-quoits, with the bucket for a receptacle and an accurate aim as a necessity, or, at least, an advantage.

Undoubtedly, the supreme game for the active on board ship to-day is deck-tennis. It has completely superseded the once-popular pastime of deck-cricket. I do not know that I can truthfully lament the fact.

Cricket is a noble game. But, as waged on board ship, there were disadvantages. These were painfully obvious, when fielding at the number one line—a very rough equivalent of point, save that the distance which separated the batsman and fielder was only three or four yards. Too often the race would be to the swift—which was the ball. Now, a conscientious quarter-master

can easily achieve a wood-like consistency in one of these string balls.

I have often wished that there were fewer conscientious quarter-masters, especially when fielding against such terrifying giants as Lord Hawke and Archie Maclaren. Aye, I (*moi qui vous parle*) have done this and, in part, survive ! This accident is merely owing to the fact that I diligently served the number two mark, avoiding the number one as a saint flees the devil and all his works ! Even so, the episode was sufficient. Every frustrated run had its own particular proud bruise to show.

Deck-tennis, on the other hand, is apt to leave one intact in all but wind. To my mind it is by far the best board-ship game which has ever been invented. The play of the quickly-spinning rope quoits will give you all the exercise you need in a very long day's steam.

The game works very much on the lines of ordinary lawn tennis, played on a smaller court and over a higher net. The quoit must be caught and returned without the least pause, and it is possible to secure at least as many swift and twisty returns as in the ordinary game. Indeed, the merits of the game are such as to have caused it to be taken up in a certain number of places ashore as well as afloat.

Of course, there is a "crab" to it—no pastime on earth lacks its own particular little crustacean. No downward stroke is permitted, and, although it is laid down that the hand holding the quoit must never be raised above the shoulder, decisions on this point are by no means as easy as might be supposed.

The game has become so popular that it will undoubtedly have to possess its own association and defined rules. One drop of official regulation will save salt oceans of bitter strife. The umpire at deck-tennis may well envy the Midland football referee his tranquil life! In spite of this, deck-tennis continues to flourish.

Nothing shall deter me from giving an account of the few days entirely devoted to the athletic



sports which, for a thrilling period, infest the decks of liners. You will know when these sports are on the eve of occurring, because two or three earnest and predatory young men, with pencils, paper, and a suitable subscription smile, will roam to and fro be-

tween the deck chairs, devouring such ready cash as they may.

This is, strictly speaking, supposed to be devoted entirely to prizes and general expenses. But a really enterprising committee ought to be able to look after its own interests. Having served on many, I can only say that the repeated failure to achieve anything of the kind fully explains the present decadent state of British Industry, also

the reason why, with the Germans in possession of more millions of marks than they can count in twice ten thousand years, the number of British sovereigns remains much the same as ever !

Well, there—but let us drop high finance ! We were talking about sports, and people who outrun their competitors instead of the constable. Everything in these sports is conducted on conventional lines. The committee have badges and brawls with each other. Some do the work in order that others may achieve the glory—oh, yes, quite a number of these officials will tell you this quite a number of times in their bitter hours of duty ! As to the competitors, the situation here, too, is completely normal. There is always the man who wins, and three or four others who ought to have won. You need not have the slightest fear that you will not feel perfectly at home.

As to the competitions themselves, let us describe them briefly, endeavouring to throw a lively but illuminating light on each.

The potato race may be run by both sexes—that is to say, of human beings, not of potatoes. In fact, the potatoes do not seem to have much say in the affair : all they have to do is to lie on the deck, to be raced for, snatched up, and flung into a bucket. The potato race is not always to the fleetest, for to miss a pail entails as much disaster as to hit a bucket-shop on shore. This sporting event is productive of much admirable exercise, both for wind and bad language.

The driving race is a cock-and-hen function. The man is blindfolded, ropes are fastened to his arms, and, as usual, the woman pulls him whichever way

she likes. The course lies through a maze of standing bottles. Penalties are exacted for the upsetting of any of these. This seems unjust, for since the bottles are empty it cannot much matter. A winning male is strongly urged not to become engaged to his lady driver: she knows too much about the handling of men for his comfort.

The thread-the-needle race is wisely introduced in order to remind a man that, although he may be rollicking on board ship, there are other things—such as home, domesticity, and the proper person to go to when you want a tear in your trousers mended. It is the woman who threads the needle and the man who runs.

The egg-and-spoon race is said to be an adaptation of the famous egg trick of Columbus, an early traveller on this route. It is again a sign of the degeneracy of the times that, whereas Columbus's egg fell from a real hen and was properly squishy, these modern things are fowl fruits merely in name—plaster-of-Paris monstrosities, without a bend in them anywhere.

But more of this would be boring, though there is much



beyond. Blindfolded, you may attempt to chalk-in the eye on the right portion of a pig, cunningly and brilliantly designed on the deck by the attendant—much to the hilarity of the lookers-on. You may tie yourself up in a lifebelt and race back to submit to the captain's stern verdict on the set of your cork costume.

Two pastimes, moreover, which are designed for the enjoyment of the spectators alone are cock-fighting and spar-boxing. In the former, of course, two severely trussed men attack each other in blind ferocity with their toes, until the capsized one, in mute and sideways agony, is heaved from the magic circle; while the latter, furiously fought on a spar above the swimming bath, ends in the downward plunge of the defeated.

Then there is the ambitious obstacle race, the tug-of-war—in which the married team, probably owing to the cares which lie so heavily on them, nearly always vanquish the single—the whisky-and-soda race, a test of a swift swallow as well as of a fleet foot, and many more such events than space permits to be described here.

I believe that



everybody, in his heart, thoroughly enjoys this strenuous spell of sports; but it is not always quite the thing to admit it. It is not a bad notion to say, rather loudly: "When is this infernal affair coming to an end? Ship's like a parrot-house of mad monkeys!" or words to that effect. This will clearly show that your temperament has nothing in common with the struggles of cocks and potatoes. And then you will hurry off to be in time for the final of the children's egg-and-spoon race!

On the other hand, you may really dislike all forms of physical exercise. You may want to run a race in nothing beyond *petits chevaux*; you may prefer the odd trick at bridge to a bucket flung full of triumphant quoits. It may even please you to contemplate the eye of a girl rather than chalk that of a pig. In short—to put in the crudest fashion that which is the aim of the League of Nations—you may believe in a hug of love rather than a tug of war.

After all, the ocean is a free country, and such pastimes are occasionally preferred — although there is no reason why an all-round person should not do a little of both, in strict moderation, of course. Even so, you will be all the better off for the sports. For the eager assembly at their function leaves so many unusually quiet corners elsewhere — spots which may be worth a guinea a minute to those who have given some study to what they consider their proper use!

CHAPTER XV.

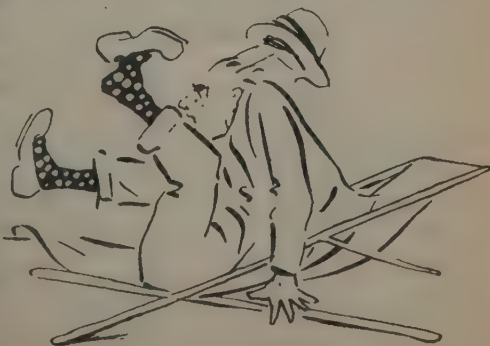
IRRESPONSIBLE HOURS.

PROVIDED that the humour be the right and proper sort, I suppose there is no reason why a ship should not be as full of "rags" as a roving, reeking, ruffianly rascalion of a ragamuffin.

The profession demands a certain sense of humour, otherwise the "rag" becomes the sport of fools. The mere tampering with a deck chair, for instance, so that it descends to the deck in company with the body of its owner, may amuse some people, but not very often. If this sort of thing is really necessary, one can achieve much more imaginative and effective work by means of hair brushes disposed in a bed, or some similar

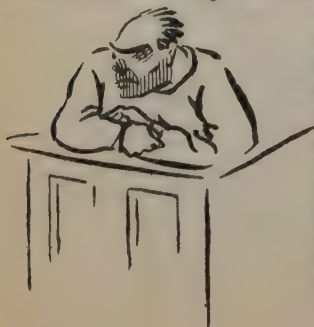
scheme which has the advantage of a certain mystery.

The old sea-pantomime of the Court of Neptune on the Equator seems to be



developing into a mere memory. The dramatic value of the world's half-way house seems all but extinct. To-day one is content with saying, in a perfunctory manner, "Ah, we are crossing the Line!" Usually that completes the ceremony. A few people—fortunately their tribe is all but extinct—still persist in working up some obviously specious emotion in proclaiming, "There it is, over there, on the water! Can't you see it?" But with the heavy fall of the hoariest of chestnuts, the matter comes to a sudden end.

In these days the marine practical joke has grown far more elaborate and far less arbitrary. The person who used to be known as the Greenhorn, and who had to suffer the accepted penalties of his innocence, may go to sea now with a perfectly ludicrous sense of security. Ah, we live in a soft age, some of us, now and then! Even in a Trial by Jury the defendant has to consent beforehand to being prosecuted. It seems a ridiculous concession, though I admit that, were it more widely extended, it would add to the world's comfort and would be warmly welcomed by many ashore.



On two of these occasions I have been pressed into service as Counsel for the Defence. The first charge was a fairly serious one. The prisoner was accused of having stolen the ship's bathwater. There was nothing in the charge concerning his having made any use of

, and he certainly looked the part. In fact, the alleged offender had succeeded admirably in disguising himself as a most complete villain—although in private life he was the manager of a very large coal industry, was owned by wife and two children, and had various other claims to respectability. As it was, his appearance was ruffianly enough to have prevented even the most ingenuous and confiding from entrusting to him anything from the ship's cat to a secondhand postage-stamp!

It was a difficult case. Judge, jury and spectators eyed the repulsive being with open horror, while the Prosecuting Counsel thundered. It looked as though things were going badly for the poor wretch, but in that case I am thankful to say that I was successful. There was need for desperate measures. Just as the judge was beginning to sum up there was a fluttering inrush into the extemporized court, and his family—five of the prettiest girls on the ship, improvised for the occasion—burst in. Weeping bitterly, they clung to the grimy prisoner and flung themselves down in supplication before the judge. A wave of deep emotion convulsed the entire court. The result was certain then. Sympathetic cheers greeted a triumphal acquittal, though there were some who had the effrontery to say that a miscarriage of justice had occurred!

The second trial by jury, against all precedent, was as great a surprise to the prisoners as to most of the spectators who witnessed its dramatic development. It was, perhaps, a little harrowing that Fate willed it that the prisoners should be two very charming girls. They were charged,

moreover, with a really very sinister act. It was brought against them that they had stolen a baby from the boatswain: further, that they had secretly laid it on the threshold of the captain's cabin.

The arrests occurred almost simultaneously. One prisoner was tapped on the shoulder and handcuffed in the midst of a set of deck-tennis; the other met her fate in the social hall. Most of



the other passengers under standing nothing of what was going on remained in dumb

founded attitudes; but the warrants, heavily sealed, spoke for themselves. Unfortunately, one of the miserable young women gave rise to further scandal. Sur

prising her gaolers in an unguarded moment, she broke away and fled down the deck, handcuffed as she was, hotly pursued by the officials in their complete devotion to duty.

At the trial itself the child was there for all to see—a beautiful, white-clothed, waxen being that could open and shut its eyes in pathetic bewilderment. I regret to say that the ladies were convicted. It was a blow to one's reputation, but it seemed to me that the judge and jury were biased. Even before the charge had been officially brought

he former explained that the sentence would be a severe one, and there is no doubt that the jury were influenced by him. But as the cocktails (the consumption of which was the penalty) had already been poured out, and were in danger of becoming warm, I suppose there was no help for it !

Of course, there have been occasions, many years ago, when " rags " tended to possess a more boisterous side. On my very first visit to South America the ship happened to carry a very considerable number of English *estancieros*. They were excellent fellows, devotees to polo and sport in general, and they still remain so.

At the same time, I cannot absolutely guarantee that they are all of them exactly what they were. Some of them are much more so. Increasing acres and a few added years have entailed a corresponding gain in the waistcoat measurements; indeed, there is no doubt that one of them in especial, after having tee'd his ball on a golf course, cannot much longer abstain from the use of a periscope—that is to say, if he is to have a chance of seeing where it is !

But these are side-issues, however ponderous. We must return to that voyage of a slenderer age.

On all occasions these genial souls were prepared to make the most of everything until the time should come for them to wait on the threshold of the worms' dining-room. But this was a very special period—a time of boom, when bank balances soared to marvellous heights in sympathy with the price of land and cattle.

Such a period is wont to produce a certain

effervescence, and when this fit takes the outdoor man he is apt to bubble over more extensively than the sedentary person. Late one night this group was taken possession of by that spirit of cheeriness which is sufficiently emphatic to be attributed to the devil.

They began by flinging overboard some deck chairs, the property of the company. Soon they



became distinctly vexed at their failure to hear the splash of the falling chairs, feeling that they were receiving short measure, as it were. Then, a good or bad luck would have it, a perambulator made fast for the night in a corner of the deck, fell into their hands. When this vehicle, inhabited by an *estanciero*, was let loose, the slight roll of the

ship sufficed to send it in a wild career from side to side, until it would spill its occupant into the scuppers. This was called the game of motor-cars, and lasted until the perambulator, dangerously splayed out, was abandoned, with some confessions of a pricking conscience.

These, however, did not seem sufficiently powerful to prevent the planning of a tremendous programme to follow. So enterprising was this, that the time seemed fitting to retire. Disregarding firmly the shouts of protest, I had got halfway down the companion stairs, when a combined shriek of warning from above sounded just in time. They had let loose a gigantic roll of carpet, laid up for the night, to see if it or I would arrive at the bottom first. The affair was coming down like a steam-roller. It was a fairly close thing, but I managed to win with some six inches to spare!

The next morning the *estancieros* protested that the whole thing had been a dream. But they made no bones whatever about paying for such damage as their slumberous enthusiasm had caused!

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ART OF DANCING AND DINING.

A GOOD many years ago one or two men used to tour the rural districts of England with the object of selling miracle-working medicines and lotions. They would also, free of charge, draw the teeth of any sufferer bold enough to mount the platform. The affair was accompanied by music, and, as the extractor bent to his work, a great blare of brass and banging of drums would precede the triumphant flinging of the tooth into the air in order that the crowd might mark and admire.

It was supposed at the time that the object of this great burst of melody was to drown the wailing of the untoothed, and it is difficult to find any fault with this theory.

There are probably some people who imagine that a liner is provided with an orchestra for some similar occult purpose—in rough weather. If so, they are mistaken. The presence of the bandsmen on board ship is for no more sinister reason than that of providing food for the passengers' ears and, incidentally, for the feet of the dancers. As you know, there are various species of dances. Let us begin with the most ambitious, the fancy-dress ball.

A fancy-dress ball on board is designed to fulfil

a double purpose. It is intended to arouse joyous abandon in the dancers, and enthusiasm in the spectators. Sometimes it does : sometimes it does not. It all depends on the temperament and mood of the wayfarers. One has had similar experiences ashore !

Successful masquerading implies the art of being misunderstood ; but it is hard when you are misunderstood from the wrong angle, so to speak. That is to say, Nature may have cast you in a ponderous and melancholy mould. Very well, then, out of sheer unselfishness and to enter into the spirit of the thing, you will turn yourself just for an hour or two into a merry and airy sprite. Mind you, this will cost you some effort, to say nothing of the price of the hired *pierrot's* costume ! It is a poor reward to be taken merely for a lunatic.

But, apart from this, I must admit that I particularly dislike those groups of people who stand about the decks with cold eyebrows lifting over chilly eyes. Surely, in common justice, people who undergo the pain of wearing clothes merely for other people's amusement have the right to expect the same interest as the inmates of zoological cages. Give me glares of hatred, horror, or even of detestation—anything rather than that tranquil, absent-minded glance of withering indifference.

Fortunately, these spirits of damp are rare. At a fancy-dress dance it is necessary to let oneself go. On these occasions dignity is not divine ; it is damnable, and should be as dead as a door-nail. Self-consciousness, too, must be conquered at any

cost. Yes, even at the risk of a grave loss of reputation, I would go to the length of asserting that—if there is no other way—those uneasy concerning their feet, tongues and general angles should cut out this consciousness by means of a couple of cocktails—which, I suppose, is highly immoral. But it is a means to an end, which will be achieved if you can once succeed in becoming oblivious to your own ends !

When you come to think of it, there is no reason on earth why dear old —— should not walk the deck as Julius Cæsar or Puck, merely because he happens to be a director of three meat companies and two insurance concerns. Very often he does, after having cautiously spied out the scene of illumination and revelry in order to make certain that he will find sufficient comrades in similar disguise.

The hour demands its sacrifice. If your heart be tormented, hide it some way beneath a smiling face—I mean, your own, not somebody else's. In so good a cause I myself have frequently outraged even such small portion of dignity as was ever vouchsafed—and then, with a fine gesture, have flung the remaining shreds clean overboard for the flying-fish to play with ! A very short time ago, for instance, I was lured by a travelling Lorelei into a situation which may well have appalled and dismayed the audience.

It was only a couple of hours before the motley function that I was called on to play my part by this very charming lady, with whom, I am glad to say, I still remain on good terms.

She was a dragon-fly for that night—a slim and

dazzling blue-green creature, with dainty, shimmering wings. It was only natural that one of her sex should desire a short and stout beetle as a foil, a sort of murky background to throw into relief her brilliance.

So the command was sent, accompanied by the costume itself. This was founded on a bathing suit and provided with wings specially contrived by the carpenter. The finishing touches, it appeared, were feathers for antennæ and a black face painted with brilliant red circles!

All these preparations made it clear that something had gone wrong somewhere and that I had not originally been intended as the creator of this beetle's rôle. But that did not matter; neither did the strict instructions which accompanied the costume. One of these was an injunction to stuff it with pillows in order to produce a rounded effect.

Now, this last may have been subtle flattery, or merely the result of not having noticed things. Anyhow, a prolonged spell of Argentine hospitality



rendered the device superfluous—indeed, impossible. As it was, there followed some nerve-racked hours. At the end of these one remarked with delighted amazement that the thing—what our Gallic friends would call a “machine”—still hung together; but it must have been a trying and anxious time for everybody.

There is no reason why you should not win one of the prizes at the fancy-dress ball. At least, I have never met a participant who saw any just cause why he, or she, should not. Some energetic canvassing beforehand may work wonders! Also, there is one infallible bait on which the votes of the doubtful will fasten their teeth—appear as Britannia, the Stars and Stripes, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Spain, or somewhere else of the kind, and a wave of patriotic fervour may yet at the proper time lead you up the aisle of the social hall to receive, amid applause, the reward of your ingenuity.

Sometimes these functions contain elements of surprise. Thus, on one occasion, some time ago, both dancers and spectators were gratified by the appearance of a steward bearing a vast tray of cocktails. These were offered: “With the captain’s compliments, and he would be glad if you would take a cocktail with him.”

The result, of course, was a shower of bows, nods, and smiles directed at the “old man,” who was seated in the neighbourhood. The last glass was reserved for the captain himself, and here the steward for the first time altered his formula. It went: “The bedroom stewards’ compliments, and they would be glad if you would take a cocktail with them. There’s more where this comes from.”

It was not until the steward was about to be placed under arrest by the empurpled captain that it was discovered that beneath the loan of the uniform, so to speak, agitated the personality of a prominent passenger. He was a godsend both in liquids and sensation.

Compared with a fancy-dress ball, the ordinary evening dances may be tame affairs in the way of local colour. But sometimes they go with an astonishing swing. Thus, one homeward-bound voyage in November the ship must have contained an unusual number of well-assorted couples. They began to dance on the night of the departure from Buenos Aires; they danced through the tropics, the Doldrums, and beyond, while the Southern Cross faded beneath the stern, and the North Sea rose over the bow.

It seemed nothing could stop them. They danced through the Bay of Biscay and the Channel, where the sky and sea grew grey, and the orchestra stamped their feet, and blew on their fingers. They danced along Southampton Water and up to the very port itself. And here came the climax. For some reason or other there had been delay, and the ship did not approach the landing stage until night. Certainly the groups of expectant relatives and friends ashore must have thought that some lunatic ship was coming into port. For, as the giant hull was slowly warped alongside, the music was sounding ceaselessly from the brilliantly lit decks, on which the couples were enthusiastically careering, entirely oblivious of the anxious crowd ashore.

Of course, if you possess a taste for private

enterprise on board ship, there is no reason why you should not indulge it. An overdose of egotism is lamentable in a book such as this, but, alas! there are moments when that importunate imp insists on leaping out of his cage.

Here, then, is the menu of a dinner which I had the honour of giving on board the "Arlanza" in 1921:—

R.M.S.P. "ARLANZA,"

March 6th, 1921.

Children's Dinner Party

Given by W. H. KOEBEL.

DILL WATER
1889

MENU.

LAIT (Goat)
1902

HORS D'ŒUVRES

BREAD AND MILK

LAIT
(très au naturel)
1921

MOTHER SIEGEL'S SYRUP

QUAKER OATS

IPECACUANHA
WINE
(Special Cuvée)
Extra Sec.

BENGER'S FOOD AU GRATIN

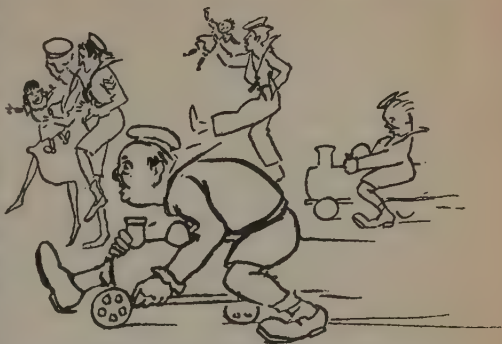
COMPOTE DE SWIZZLE À LA
NESTLÉ

THAT'S ALL!

HINTS FOR BEHAVIOUR.

1. If you dislike anything you should always try to swallow it. If you can't, never eject it on the tablecloth. This is rude. Remember there is always the floor (or deck).
2. Wipe your mouth after *every* course. If there is no napkin, your kind little neighbour will allow you to use her frock.
3. Never try to talk and eat at the same time unless you are quite sure that you won't splash. Use your handkerchief *before* sneezing. Remember to thank your generous host.

Though I should not say it, the party was something of a success. The guests raced up and down the saloon with their toy trains and dolls. There was very little quarrelling, and it was only to be expected that the excitable folk should, as the meal progressed, use as missiles, grapes, peeled bananas, and chocolates, somewhat



to the detriment of their costumes. When, however, two or three of them, borrowing soda-water syphons from venal and grinning stewards, squirted each other into a moist and appalling mess, it was felt that there had been some definite breach in good

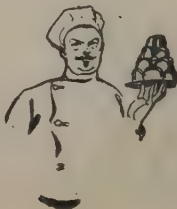
manners. So the culprits, sobbing, were stood in a corner by a nurse specially engaged for the occasion, while the rest of the diners in the saloon looked on in reproachful sympathy.

But there was much hilarity mingled with these painful scenes, and I subsequently found that the Press at home had had something to say about the affair. One morning paper produced a paragraph headed: "Happy Children on the 'Arlanza,'" while the rest had their own versions of what had occurred.

Nevertheless, things are not always as they seem. Let me, confessing all, tear the veil from the mystery, and reveal what actually occurred. It is true that there was a bevy of pigtails, socks and sailor suits, but there was not a single child present—in point of years, although one or two of the guests possessed infants of their own.

Moreover, in spite of the menu, the actual food would have played havoc with the inside of any quite immature person.

In fact, the *maître d'hôtel* gave us an extraordinarily good dinner, and I most sincerely hope that he will note these remarks in case it ever prove necessary to repeat this miracle of the falling away of the years!



CHAPTER XVII.

GOING ASHORE.

EVERY passenger has his moments of Columbus. Even those who make a habit of the cross-Channel passage feel a faint thrill at the sight of the approaching shore, whether of England or France, when they have time to think about it !

The periodical breaks in the voyage of a liner afford more momentous intervals to those on board. From a mere cloud on the horizon the land is swelling into shape, and there are some who set eyes on it for the first time. The only thing that distinguishes them from Columbus is that others have seen it before !

Even to those familiar with the ports of call there is a certain charm in a renewed visit. One may be doing one thing after another, completely oblivious for the moment that such a thing as earth exists, or that there is any verdure on the globe beyond the palms in the saloon and social hall. Nevertheless, when the word has been passed that land is in sight the effect on every passenger is instantaneous. Books, chairs, and the implements of the various games suddenly become desolate and neglected. All cabins, large and small, general and private, yield up their inmates in haste in order that these may go to swell the small crowds which are already peering out eagerly from various points of vantage.

Sometimes one enters a port in quite another fashion. You will find that the place has come to you quite suddenly, like some strange and unexpected visitor from out of the night. Now, this method is more striking and dramatic than the other. You may have turned into your bunk conscious of nothing but the ocean without, and the low soporific swirl of the wash along the side. In short, there seemed nothing but the sea.

Awaking, a very different scene will be framed by the portholes. Beyond an expanse of dead calm water are jetties, buildings, spires, with green



hills for a background—all gliding very slowly past, for the screw is sending out its last leisurely throbs with a dying vigour.

From above sounds the echoing boom of the liner's horn, and, in response to this, a flotilla of craft is coming, ruffling the still waters as it approaches. There are official and commercial launches, churning busily, and a fleet of rowing-boats—these last humble vehicles of the water lagging far behind. Anyhow, the whole flotilla is careering blithely along—eager messengers from the shore.

Of course, unless you be one of those unfortunate people of worn and deadened susceptibilities, you will fling on your clothes with some haste, and mount to the deck. Here there is a ceaseless massing and dispersing of groups. The air is rent with a single oft-repeated question. "Going ashore?" The answers vary from dubious grunts to murmurs of enthusiasm.

The only other topic of conversation is the probable length of the stay at anchor. Were the purser in sight, his existence would be shattered in the midst of an interrogatory battlefield. But, in close confabulation with the local agent of the line, he has hidden himself in some secure and remote corner. So the crop of sheer rumour flourishes. There are surmises, hopes, and fears, until the notice in the companion, official and conclusive, puts an end to all uncertainty.

Then, the mind even of the most doubtful at rest, he will make his way towards the gangway to begin the business of the day. Here, if he be quite inexperienced in the act of going ashore, he is likely to meet with one or two minor trials. The road to the gangway is thronged, while the decks in the neighbourhood are crowded with visitors, hawkers, and strangers of every description.

There are some people too, whose faces seem strangely familiar, and who yet puzzle the memory for quite a long time. At length the inspiration comes. They are a group of men and women from the second-class quarters, who have been remarkable for little beyond a blowsy negligé of dress. Now, for this trip ashore, they have, quite without

warning, cast off the dull shell, and outshine almost all the rest ! It is a most remarkable transformation ! All this adds a little to the effect of bewilderment.

It is as though one had stepped out of a train into the turmoil of a terminus. Dismayed by the bustle above and the press of waiting boats beneath, the man who has yet to learn will take a place at random among the rest of the folk who are elbowing their way towards the ladder.

If he has made plans to form one of an equally inexperienced party, it is only on actually entering one of the boats that the common fate is revealed. With leisure now to look about him, he sees that the elements of a sympathetic band have become lamentably disintegrated. Some are in the neighbouring boats, while the countenances of others, belated, loom darkly from over the lofty side of the vessel.

He has probably entered a boat whose nose is embedded in with those of a dozen others at the foot of the ladder. He may wonder at the boatman's delay in pushing off. But that enterprising person has his eye upon the descending stream of humanity, and his greed for passengers is yet unsated ; he has become stricken with sudden and complete deafness. With a resolution which would be admirable in other circumstances, he will hang on to the ladder until the last chance has passed him by and, even then, will only depart with the reluctance of a miner abandoning a still dubious goldfield.

It is perhaps as well that the steam and motor launch have now, except in the quite remote spots

superseded the rowing boat and the wiles of its proprietor; but, in any case, the experienced traveller is bothered with none of these things. One may watch him occasionally as he pilots his party in complete leisure down the starboard ladder towards a waiting boat when the gangway on the opposite side is thronged. He is not to be flurried and is callous to the emphatic chorus of entreaty that comes braying upwards from the owners of the small craft. Then he will glide away from the liner in comfort, to skim the cream of amusement from the port, and to return with a pocket less attenuated than those of the rest.

Experience shows that a shore-going party should be arranged with at least as much care as a picnic on land. Remember that most people have at least two sides to their temperament: some possess very many more. Anyhow, almost anybody has sufficient stock of character to use some on ship, some on shore, and then to have a little left over.

Naturally the quality varies in every one. Very few people keep exactly the same quality of character for the ship as for the shore. You have become more or less familiar with those particular habits, customs and mannerisms of your neighbours that have been revealed on board; it is left for the shore to reveal the others—and sometimes there are quite a lot of them.

Of course, we are dealing for the most part with trivial affairs now. But trivialities are rat-like things: a dozen of them will eat into the finest structure of joy or of melancholy. Certainly they count. For instance, you had no idea that that

very good fellow Jones *could* find it in him to wear a hat like that on shore. He seems to have invested himself with a brand new set of manners, too. His ways with waiters and shopmen are striking enough to be disconcerting, while his chaffing affability towards flower-sellers and beggars is of an order which compels an uncomfortable amount of public attention.

In short, Jones is not at his best. One feels sorry that they do not know him better ashore: one feels inclined to take the staring knots of townspeople into complete confidence and to say to them, "Come and spend a week on board the ship with us; then you will get to know and like this excellent man. This is not he; there is nothing of him here but his skin. That hat, and those clothes, and those manners—they are just masquerade!"

But this would take some doing. A more practical remedy is to engage him in ceaseless and serious conversation, endeavouring to distract him from his public performances by deep discussions on prohibition, Coué, bi-metallism, or the ethics of the after-life. But even here complete success is not to be guaranteed, and, after all, one did not come ashore for this!

This sort of thing affords a remarkable tribute to ship-board life, if you come to think of it. Its atmosphere includes none of these minor worries. It is a cage, where the raven and the wren live in comparative peace and where there is no one who is anxious to start a dog-fight.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DRAMA AND DRINK.

HAVE you ever travelled with a real Italian opera company, a genuine passionate-voiced, full-lunged outfit ? It is by no means an unpleasant experience. The ship resembles a combined lark and canary cage. But there are much worse things than that.

For you to appreciate the full merits of a travelling Italian opera company it is indispensable that the sea should be as smooth as a mirror. These ardent people cannot wait for *mal de mer* in the ordinary way ; a ruffle, insufficient to drown a mouse floating on seven straws, laid crossways, suffices. They rush to meet it with both hands extended and overflowing hearts. Having met it, they droop. Their voices die like withering bells of the lily-of-the-valley. As for they themselves—well, they were, but they are no more. In short, they have ceased to be !

This is the winter of discontent of the artistic temperament expressed in song. But the black season is apt to be brief. Five minutes of the right consistency of glassy surface will revive them just as the first blackthorn flower impels the thrush to sing. The men will saunter to and fro, with widely strutting legs. Walking round one of the deck-houses, one is all but blown backwards by

meeting the full blast of "Pagliacci" breathed out by a tenor who has approached from the other side. As for the ladies, they warble and trill as they recline in attitudes of that perfect and complete repose to which humanity never seems to attain anywhere off the stage.

Anyhow, they are for the most part extraordinarily amiable folk, generously lavish in the giving of concerts, which are often very much worth the while of the audience. Their stay is a breezy experience, which is apt to leave its echoes behind it, for they nearly always inoculate the bedroom stewards with a passion for music, whether whistled or hummed, which endures for some days.

Travelling circus folk are a little different. Anyhow, the operatic people probably think them so. Certainly, there is a distinction; for the most agile acrobat seldom, if ever, soars above the second class. Here, it is only the rarest stars who travel in the first saloon—a super-clown, perhaps, and the proprietor.

I do not know where the gentleman who cracks the whip goes. I have never identified him on board. There is a general inclination to regard him as a proprietor, which I have always shared, but I am hopelessly weak in the technicalities of the sawdust ring. From the point of view of finance he may be as much curtailed as his whip-lash is extended.

Even clowns—of the confessed order—are sufficiently rare as first-class passengers, which is, perhaps, rather a pity. Certainly there was one of these jesters of the ring who brightened very

considerably at least an hour of one particular voyage. Word flew round the ship that he had lost something. No one seemed quite to know the nature of his loss. It could not have been jewels. That is a speciality of the boards before they are ground into sawdust! Besides, it is impossible to associate jewels with a clown who takes his profession seriously.

In fact, everybody seemed completely vague as to what it was that this unfortunate clown had mislaid. All that people knew was that it was a serious matter, which demanded immediate relief. This took the form of a benefit entertainment given by himself.

It was an admirable performance. Garbed as a toreador, he fought with a bull-dog got up to represent a miniature bull. The struggle was gallant in the extreme. No full-sized bull ever charged more fiercely, and before the animal finally lay motionless on the deck, the adventures of the toreador were too lengthy and thrilling to be described here.

Anyhow, it was a most amusing entertainment. Fortunately for the clown, it occurred at a prosperous pre-war period, and at its conclusion he received two clowns' caps half-filled with silver, with a gold piece or two shining out as a pretty contrast. Having in vain attempted to embrace the two male volunteer collectors, the gratified man departed to doff his costume, and was seen no more that night.

The next morning, however, there was a merry group on the second-class deck, quaffing champagne in bumpers, and the host was our friend the clown.

This scene was repeated for five days. On the sixth this convivial picture was lacking. On the afternoon of that day the word again circulated round the ship that the clown had lost something. Nobody quite knew what it was—and this time I fear that nobody seemed to care very much. It was felt that these losses were too expensive all round. Moreover, there had been too many thirsty souls leaning in parched wistfulness on the rail overlooking the second-class deck!

Before the war many of these entertainments and masquerades were engineered by the ships'



companies themselves. Few who have travelled by the "Amazon," for instance, will forget the stewards' variety entertainment, or the menagerie procession of

the foremen, which included two stately elephants, a most agile monkey, and other beasts, as well as clowns, policemen, tamers, and a powerful band in military uniform. It was a most popular performance; but the "Amazon" will know it no more, for she lies many fathoms deep beneath the ocean, a victim of a hostile torpedo.

Sometimes you may find yourself shipmates with a genuine star of the stage, travelling privately.

On such occasions it is hardly reasonable to expect them to get up and say their little pieces for the benefit of the public. Sometimes, however, in an expansive moment of good nature, they may volunteer.

There was a time, for instance, quite recently, when the very gifted lady who starred so brilliantly in "Chu Chin Chow" came aboard after a stay at Madeira. It was then that fate willed that I should rise to the supreme height of my dramatic career. The prelude to this performance was a burlesque at a somewhat advanced hour in the social hall, which must—I think, very correctly!—have aroused the enthusiasm of Miss Lily Brayton; for at the conclusion she organized the slave market scene from "Chu Chin Chow," which went with a zeal that filled the windows of the large room with faces of wonderment.

Subsequently the dismayed author of these lines was called on to play Omar in the desert scene with the famous lady! The costume was simple but convincing; a towel wrapped as a turban over a dinner jacket—and, of course, the rest.

It is not for me to describe that rendering. Mr. St. John Ervine or Mr. Sydney Carroll might attempt it. But I doubt if they would succeed. There were no footlights. There was merely a bit of the social hall in front. But it "got over" that strip of carpet. Powerful men went down in waves of emotion, while women fluttered on the very borderline of hysterics!

Yes, the performance leaves a glow! Afterwards, I went again to see the play in London—

where the other Omar was playing. If you will believe it, it was quite a different thing !

We will now abandon the higher flights of the drama for something which, in quite a different way, is almost of as much interest to the general public. It is a delicate subject. It is a problem from which many would shrink—indeed, alas ! from which many have already shrunk. We shall not do this. For our part the urgent call for decisive action leaves us not unmoved. The time has come to grasp the nettle. We intend to do this with a blend of firmness and candour.

[This style is strongly recommended for leader-writers. I think it is rather good. Let us do another paragraph.]

This procedure is not one which we have sought ; it has been thrust upon us. We accept it. Why ? For the cloud-clear reason of our immutable policy—the policy of the previous pages—which has been in direct and convincing accordance with the general plan laid down by the instrumentality of what even our bitterest and loudest opponents now admit was an unusual amount of thought. We deserve no credit for the simple fact that it has proved correct in every single respect. So much has come about owing to little beyond an unusual gift of wisdom vouchsafed by a higher power over which one has little—or, perhaps, even less—control. To that power, then, be the praise ! We deserve none of it ; no more, at least, than in the light of the highest judgment can conveniently be spared from that mighty and mysterious Force which, in its inscrutable wisdom, has seen fit to

build its nest and lay its golden eggs in the midst of our own humble grey matter.

This, I fear, is the end. It is most annoying to have to climb down from these branches where hang the brightest blossoms of literature. Anyhow, perhaps this splendid little preface will suffice to bring us to the real point of departure. This, frankly—it is a terrible drop!—is concerned with the logic of liquids.

On the whole, I am not one of those prone to shed moisture in the way of tears merely because British ships have not gone “dry.” Frankly, there are several things which seem a pity to me—in the character of one who has falsified the prayerful predictions of family and friends by still delaying the dire development of the dark and dreary doom of the deep, desperate drunkard.

Why, then, operate on the trunk of a person when a snake has bitten his little finger? On reflection, it is just possible that surgeons *may* do this. In surgical science I have perhaps specialized so profoundly in what may be called the occult operations of the toothpick that it is not unlikely that the mere details of some of the other branches may have escaped me. But, if my question be reasonable, then the argument is sound, and I am sure you will agree with me that it is a very telling one!

Who knows what will be the ultimate results of the uprooting of that fine army of white-coated American barmen? The most desiccated of parching prohibitionists cannot deny that this was a cruel wrench, done in grim silence, without even so much as that bang which punctuates the

passing of the suffering cork from the champagne bottle.

What has happened? Simply this, that these public servants have departed to ply their skill in other lands, where a thirst—which, after all, is as much of a direct gift from heaven as is the dew—is still an object of sympathy and respect. Very well, then, recall to your mind your history! Read again of the disaster to Spain which followed the fifteenth century expulsion of the Jews. The loss of her barmen may produce a similar fate in the United States. Both refugees took their secrets with them: the Hebrews, those of finance and art; the barmen, those of blending and craft.

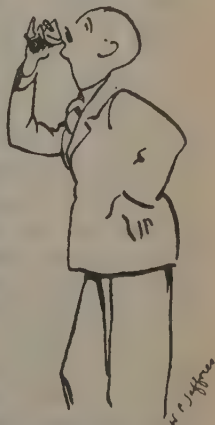
Regarded reasonably, it will be clear that, on board ship, there are certain moments definitely set apart for certain things by the law of sheer, unadulterated nature. I will not say that an occasional glass of champagne, claret and crème de menthe fit in well with the gold, purple and green of a tropic sunset (although they must not be as simultaneous as the atmospheric phenomenon), because this would be mere generalizing. No, these particular moments are flatly laid down by a decree which is probably almost divine, and which the most irreverent of mankind will only break at his peril.

It may surprise and even shock you to learn that these moments do not occur at any actual meal, for at such times you are free to do exactly as you like. The first, standing out as clearly as a lighthouse from a dark night, is immediately before lunch. This is a period of absolutely tremendous importance. You are, as it were,

poised on a mountain crest between two worlds. You have climbed, perhaps, through the toil of a dozen games, the fatigue of ten thousand words, the anxieties of the sweep, possibly the wonderings concerning a distant coast—always Excelsior! Before you sink pleasantly the fat, green slopes and the woodlands where have fed and rested the creatures—cattle and sheep, and the rest of them—that will yield up their bodies to you in just a few minutes' time.

Now, that moment demands its sacrifice—the death by drowning of the inside of a glass! It must be accompanied by music, the rattling of the dice and joyous noises from tongues, or it will lose its virtue. The fitting spot is the open-air extension of the smoking-room. There the congregation should gather, taking no shame in what they do, but practising their rites so that all the heathen may see and wonder. The difficulty is to find the heathen.

The second moment is that just preceding dinner. But I do not think it necessary to continue with this. It is just the same over again—the same two worlds, the same poise, the same devotions (no, I forgot, there is an added ceremony: the steward supplies potato chips free of charge for the evening service), and this would mean repeating the whole thing over again in different words—which is boring.



So much for two very important functions in which all proper passengers should participate. There are times when the liquids on a liner have a more general geographical scope. They serve as a remarkable boon in the way of economy to many British residents ashore in foreign parts. These if they have friends aboard, will arrive in a laudable spirit. Although, apparently, in possession of very comfortable incomes, it is their wise ambition to save money.

This may be effected quite easily by boarding one of these waiting liners. South America is a continent of champagne. But it is always dear and sometimes sweet. On the Brazilian coast, for instance, the cost may well be the double of that on the ship. Very well, then, it is actually possible to save some ten shillings or more on every bottle consumed. Now someone, wiser than his fellows, has published his discovery that money saved is money gained. From this it will readily be seen that anybody sufficiently thrifty to economize in this boardship bubbly wine on a sufficiently large scale is on the high road to fortune.

The question next arises: what is the most cooling drink for the tropics? No doubt at this point you will be waiting for the answer with bated and Saharan breath. Well, you must continue to hold it. I do not know. Besides, there are so many to choose from—enough for a human hydra with a tongue to every head.

But the perfect drink is not yet. One day, in a better and finer world, it may occur. It should slide down the throat in an icy and silken torrent. Yet it should have its little bite—the playful ni-

of a puppy, not the bite of that great dog, with which, perhaps, you are already familiar. Moreover, it should automatically cut off the tail of its after-twang as completely as though by means of a knife. In short, the sort of beverage which will make you long to possess a neck the length of an ostrich.

One day, perhaps—but not yet, not nearly yet—a brighter earth may know this liquid. Alas! we shall not be there to see.

CHAPTER XIX.

HINTS ON COSTUME.

WE have already attended to quite a number of subjects. We have dealt, rather shyly, with love, and other hobbies of the kind, as conducted on board ship. We have endeavoured to unmask officials and passengers, with as much tenderness as they deserve. We have even enjoyed an occasional glimpse of the sea—quite as much, at all events, as you will from many an establishment in a popular resort which rejoices in such names as Sea View or Ocean Prospect, and which fronts a most lively landscape such as a linen-draper's shop or a mews.

Finally, we have just taken some trouble with the question of physical interiors, male and female, and the cravings which occasionally haunt their voids. It is high time that we turned to the problems of the exterior, which, when you come to think of it, should naturally be the first to leap to the eye.

Let us attack the subject of clothes; first of all dress for men. We will avoid the topic technically known as suitings. Everybody knows all about them, and what the sea and the mermaids demand. Day dress does not matter. The other does.

I do not know how far it is permissible to go into the subject of pyjamas—or pajamas, if you prefer.

the Oriental fashion of spelling. Great is the wisdom which has come from the East, and pyjamas are one of the greatest expressions in material form of Oriental thought.

You will see at once that this latter sentence has merely been introduced to gain a little breathing space before plunging headlong into what may prove a difficult subject. Yet, why should it? Pyjamas may involve a delicate point or two—but not nearly so many as would their absence!

Let us treat this subject with the frankness it deserves. You have opportunities with pyjamas on board ship such as very seldom occur on shore. On the mighty ocean these picturesque garments have scope. It is not their fate to spend the best part of their existence hidden under a bushel of bedclothes, seeing the broad light of open day only in the flashing but diffident passage from the bed to the bathroom.

By no means. You should pay particular attention to pyjamas when about to embark on one of these trips. Your imagination may even play upon them far more luxuriantly than on any mere fancy waistcoats, or ties, or socks, or any other object of which the design is limited by convention.

There is no limit to pyjamas. They may approach the sublime. If you can afford it—and it is worth while making the endeavour—you should have the most beautiful silk ones. First of all study the shop windows in the Burlington Arcade and to the south of it, or the display at Harrods—I hold no shares in this latter admirable institution, but the tribute should be worth one of the most flaming suits! Then create a design from

your own head, and go inside and order the construction of a creation which shall be as a sun to these other pallid moons !

Let your pyjamas shine before all men ! Let them be resplendent ! Let large and gorgeous purple dragons claw and sneeze on a fiery yellow background ! Or let there be peacocks, or golden pheasants, or sunflowers—all leaping out in a gorgeous riot from the blare of their setting. In short, contrive a masterpiece which will compel the eyes as firmly as a mousetrap holds a rodent (or mouse).

If men could only wear pyjamas at Ascot—well, what a different story it would be ! . . .

On board ship, anyhow, you may let yourself go. You will not repent the extravagance. Suitably illuminated, there are times when you are almost bound to enjoy a *succès fou*. There is the before-breakfast promenade on deck : you can contrive long moments of posing in the alleyways. But best of all, there is the early arrival of the ship in port.

It is possible, for instance, that the vessel may be steaming towards the almost incredibly beautiful entrance to Rio Harbour somewhere about sunrise. Even then the decks will be crowded, for the spectacle is not one voluntarily missed even by the most hardened traveller. Very few will have dressed for the day ; even the ladies will probably be content with loose wraps, and will emerge just a little undecided as to their hair.

This is your moment ! You will appear among them, more like a god than a man, in your silks, dragons, or pheasants, or sunflowers, with



"You will appear among them more like a god than a man.")

diaphanous dressing-gown flung well back. In the eyes of the spectators you will have conquered the mountains of Rio, and the sunrise itself will blink in sudden pallor.

Moreover, one has the air of being caught unawares, which is half the battle. The awe-stricken people realize how much more beautiful it is possible to be in private than in public.

I know a man who experienced a flaming triumph of this kind—incidentally, at Rio. Afterwards, when he appeared at breakfast, clad in sober flannels, his neighbour, a lady of uncertain age, fixed on him an eye which was wistfully reminiscent and sadly tender.

“What a pity,” she sighed, “that you can’t go to bed in those things and wear the others in the day! Those you had on just now! I can hardly *bear* the sight of you without them!”

After this he came to the conclusion that the thing had been slightly overdone.

So much for this important question. But I had forgotten. We have only dealt with the male aspects. What about the others—those of the corresponding female garments? These must exist, surely, and it would seem a want of courtesy to leave them out in the cold.

Nevertheless, to use a journalistic phrase, we are on the eve of going to press, and absolutely no time remains to secure the services of a lady collaborator, who could tell us with real authority all that we are eager to know. There is no help for it. We shall have to continue content with that ignorance which is probably proper, perhaps commendable, or, I might even say, advisable!

There is no reason, however, why we should not timidly crawl past the hems of these garments—in a quite general and untechnical fashion. It would be out of the question, for instance, altogether to ignore that daily morning parade, which brightens the decks at any time from ten o'clock until twelve.

This has now become something of a function. It is necessary to be somewhat *soigné* for the occasion. Most decidedly the Argentine men are this. Owning their own jealously guarded cutters in London, they make it plain that London has done its best for them. After all, mere cloth seems very little concerned with really distinguished clothes. It all depends on where they hang, and fall, and jut—or where they fail to. Decidedly the smart Argentine sticks out in just the right places.

Needless to say, the case of the women is similar—only more so. For sheer “dressiness” commend me to one of these Argentine girls. It is a common saying that women no longer dress for the admiration of men, but rather to annoy each other. This may be so, but I do not see why the one ambition should interfere with the other.



Anyhow, the motive matters no more than the soil from which the lily springs. The only thing to be considered is that this morning promenade is a very pretty sight, with its be vies of vestal virgins and others—by which, of course, I mean the married women—who have spent their vigils at the flame kindled by the high priestesses of the

Rue de la Paix. At least, I have always understood that it was the Rue de la Paix. It is possible that some narrower and outwardly less imposing thoroughfare may outdo it in *chic*. If so, that is the one !

Yes, it is extraordinarily pretty sometimes, the sight of these coveys of handsome girls, as they go flitting leisurely past, wonderfully endowed in the matter of eyes and figures and features. They are remarkably amiable, very gay, and at the same time the soul of discretion—which they would probably remain, even were the eyes of their parents and guardians not ever present and warily watchful.

CHAPTER XX.

ABANDONING SHIP.

THERE is an art in saying good-bye. It is as difficult to master as the preliminaries of a yacht race, when the ships manœuvre for position to and fro, until the final gun sends them across the starting-line.

It is the same in partings. If you make too much haste you will have nothing left to say at the end. If you delay too long, half remains unsaid. I am not referring now to the moments preceding really lengthy separations. They are sufficiently sacred to make it a pity that they must be endured in public.

Indeed, on one occasion at the Buenos Aires Docks, I witnessed a minor tragedy in this respect—or was it a tragedy at all? An Italian labourer was leaning over the lower deck of the ship's side, talking to a pretty girl—his bride, or betrothed—who was accompanied by a number of relatives. The gangways had been withdrawn, and a space had just begun to show between ship and wharf, when the girl, breaking into passionate weeping, stretched out her arms to the man.

In a second he had vaulted clean over the side, and the couple were fast in each other's arms. Then the man tore himself away and prepared to jump back; but the space had increased.

Hesitating, he was overwhelmed and held back by the relatives and a cautious *vigilante*. There was no



boat or launch handy, and there he remained, the victim of affection, surrounded by vociferations and gestures.

Goodness knows what happened subsequently! The affair may have altered the whole trend of the man's life. In a revulsion of feeling he may have murdered

the girl who had lured him back at the cost of his passage! Or they may have lived together happily ever after in Buenos Aires, having abandoned any further attempts at steamer travel. Or, again, he may merely have caught the next boat. One can never tell. On board ship people have a way of sliding in and out of one's life in a fashion which is apt to produce giddiness.

It must be an irritation, having missed a ship, to watch the stately fabric steam away, freed from one's person but laden with one's luggage. Yet this may happen from time to time to the profoundly careless, intent on visiting a port of call. There is a remedy for this; when you go ashore

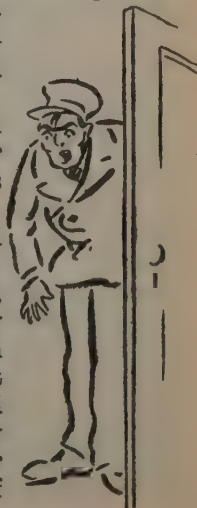
take the captain or the doctor with you. The ship cannot sail without either of them. Of course, the trip will cost you a little more, because these officials generally insist on eating and drinking just what the rest of the party do! But you can look on the extra expense as an insurance for an easy mind and a continuation of the voyage!

Occasionally some quaint mistakes are made on the other side. Once, when southward-bound, I happened to land at Madeira in company with two very prominent Brazilians—one a statesman, the other a maker of statesmen—who were travelling on the same ship. We returned earlier than had been expected in a private launch, and each of the trio went to his own cabin. A considerable time after that the ship's horn began to bellow. It roared and roared—impatiently, sulkily, angrily, furiously—until the whole giant hull seemed shaken with the sound.

Presently the door of the cabin opened and the head of the purser peered in. At the sight of me his eyes grew round.

"You here!" he exclaimed. "And where are the other two?"

When he heard that they, too, were in their cabins, he went away using language which must have been a mere preliminary canter to what the captain had to say. It appeared that the arrival of the small party had passed unnoticed; the hour for sailing was past, and in the mind of



the captain a fierce struggle had raged between punctuality and tact.

But, of course, the ordinary passenger, who is neither statesman nor statesman-maker, has no right to expect a moment of any such delay. Indeed, to those comfortably installed on the ship, there are few more thrilling sights than a belated launch, on her deck a wildly gesticulating figure or two, foaming through the waters towards the vessel just as the last clank of the rising anchor chain has sounded and the water begins to eddy about the first slow revolutions of the screws. It is a race—not invariably won by the would-be boarders.

These involuntary leave-takings must be disconcerting in the extreme to those fated to experience them. But, then, even the ordinary abandoning of a ship at the end of its trip may well be a quite regrettable affair. The officials will probably refuse to believe it, but even a passenger has his feelings. It is extraordinary how much affection can be worked up in quite a short time for a mere overgrown thing of steel and iron and wood !

The interior of a modern liner is apt to prove bewildering to travellers at the beginning of a voyage. It is possible to wander through the network of alleyways, along the wide sets of companion stairs, and finally to arrive at precisely the opposite end of the ship to that which was desired ! Moreover, if the vessel be of the largest type, one may go beyond this, and find oneself upon a lower or higher deck than one had imagined, even though the bump of locality be not lacking under ordinary circumstances. Nevertheless, to

the passenger who has spent three weeks or more on board, her cabins, nooks and corners will have grown strangely familiar. Floating hotel though she may be, she has a power, possessed by no shore hostelry, of infusing within her structure a home-like atmosphere at the shortest notice.

The orderly bustle of the stewards and crew is wont to accentuate rather than distract from this. Once familiarized with the ways and customs of the vessel, one would miss their routine even more than the beat of the screw when the engines stop at each port of call. It is, perhaps, natural that those who have joined the ship at its start should arrogate to themselves a certain domestic seniority over those interlopers who come among them at intermediate ports of call. They are already at home. It is beneath their placidly critical gaze that the hustled newcomers mount the gangway. Strong in the possession of an ordered and already individualized cabin, they may watch the hurryings and flurryings of the others from the smooth plane of the habitué. At each place of call it is the same, and the life of the steamer, even at the outward port of destination, continues brisk and ever filled.

But a vessel of the kind must hark back in the end to her home port. Nevertheless, even when she closes in upon the docks themselves, there is animation enough on board, apart from the packing of trunks and the clearing of cabins. One has, for the first time, the opportunity of comparing her freely, now that she is intimately known, with other leviathans. There is the parting from more recent acquaintances that

anticipates the welcome of friends ashore, and the wealth of incident which crowds itself into the hour of arrival. And then, with the departure of the special train, there is an end of the vessel, so far as the passengers are concerned.

It is as well for them that it is so. They bear with them the memory of the boat as they knew her. Whereas, almost ere the "special's" whistle is blown, she is midway towards a stage of which they have no conception. To board her then is to court a somewhat pathetic aftermath of the voyage. The alleyways are already chill and strange. Bare of carpets, they give out an echoing protest beneath the foot. The dismantled smoking-room breathes forth the repellent atmosphere of an unlet house. There is bequeathed to it no solitary echo of the many voices, no vision of the writhing smoke. The saloon, the music-room and the special cabin that had been his own, face the visitor with the brutal frankness of countenances that have stiffened suddenly, and ignore him. The social atmosphere of the ship had seemed its indestructible asset; yet it has been wrecked within an hour!

Upon deck there is movement enough. There are knots of people gathered here and there; there are others who hurry along the gangway to the shore. There are men in bowlers, bag in hand. It is some while ere their faces compel recognition. They are stewards, the relicts of stewards, dark-coated shadows of beings that once hastened to and fro in the full pride of office and uniform.

The bandsmen, in mufti, with instrument cases

in their hands and coat-collars muffled up about their necks, have something of the appearance of active anarchists fleeing from the scene of their crimes. Yet in those latitudes where the warm sunrays lit upon a shining sea their strains were at all events tuneful enough to have saved them from any afterpangs of dejection !

The advent of a person distinguished by kid gloves and by an overcoat with astrakhan cuffs and collar raises the belated hope that another tardy passenger may have emerged, Rip Van Winkle-like, from some forgotten corner. But his pointed beard betrays him for the barber. One hesitates between distrust of the quality of the astrakhan and misgivings as to the scale of his past charges ! But the ingratiating behaviour of the erstwhile stewardess in tailor-made dress at his side inclines one to believe in the legitimacy of the ornamentation.

The "boots" is skylarking with some friends from shore, while the chef and deck quartermaster chat in the neighbourhood of a forsaken easy chair—a relic that calls to mind many things and serves to act as a tombstone to the finished voyage.

The decks are for the time being the playground of those who have more right to them than a time-expired passenger. Yet this breaking and bubbling up of the uniformed army is apt to instil a sense of amazement in those who have watched its previous machine-like manœuvres. One had grown to look upon its members as changeless portions of the ship's decoration. One learns that they are on the eve of departure with

sensations similar to those which the structural disintegration of the vessel would instil. When they have gone will come the short period of deepest desolation. For between her voyages a liner is an empty world, her late inhabitants dead to her and the next batch in the making at the agents' hands.

CHAPTER XXI.

COMPLETE GUIDE TO SOUTH AMERICAN ROUTE.

THIS chapter is probably the most remarkable in the entire book—which ought to imply quite a lot, whatever the reader may think. Anyhow, it is the only one which is of the slightest use. So if you take the trouble to work out quite a simple sum in arithmetic you will see for yourselves how much it adds to the value of the work.

These brief lines may be called by some a potted guide book. They are, in reality, more than that. They represent a live and vivid force which takes you firmly by the hand and leads you unerringly to South America—and this, moreover, by way of the various ports! Here we omit nothing of interest, but retain absolutely the essence and not a shred beyond. The conception, in short, is a literary Oxo (or Bovril, if you prefer your beverage to begin with B).

I have inserted this last paragraph for two distinct and important reasons. In the first place, if the publisher forgets to explain the merits of the book on the wrapper—and he may not even produce a wrapper for all I know—it will go some way towards making up for all this. Secondly, it should provide useful material for the reviewers. As a reviewer myself, I am only too conscious of the little weaknesses of our class. We like being

helped with our work. Let all reviewers know that they have my full permission to use any part of the last paragraph—or even the whole of it. The publisher will be able to quote the sentences in his advertisements and, of course, the public will buy the book. It will then have the privilege of reading the paragraph in the original. This is what is termed a righteous circle, and I think everybody ought to be pleased.

Very well, then; we will start. First of all, we will deal with a salient fact.

On the main South American route, including the two termini, there are thirteen ports of call and thirteen hundred calls for port. If starting from England, you should not fail to notice your port of departure, which will be—

Southampton—a pleasant spot in the neighbourhood of the famous forest planted by William Rufus. There is also a “New Forest” of funnels in the docks. If you should have any particular trouble in finding your vessel, at all costs remember that it possesses a large single yellow funnel of a shade rather deeper than a lemon, rather lighter than a golf waistcoat. It is just possible, however, that you will be able to dispense with this feat of memory, as the boat train pulls up just opposite the gangway. You should find time to observe that the chief industry of Southampton is luggage, considerable quantities of which are usually taken on board. When this has been effected you proceed to—

Cherbourg—a Gallic port with a lengthy breakwater and some houses in the distance supposed to form part of the town. Cherbourg is remarkable

for its French atmosphere. This becomes less noticeable as you steam out to sea and make for—

Corunna, or if you want to do the thing really well you spell it *Coruña*. *Corunna* is a Spanish port, as you may readily ascertain by the uniforms of the port officials and by a touch of garlic in its atmosphere. It also contains the grave of Sir John Moore. Very little beyond this is known about the spot, as passengers seldom land there. From this romantic inlet we proceed to—

Vigo, which possesses an extensive and well-laid-out bay, surrounded by convenient and modern mountains. It was here that Drake singed the King of Spain's beard. It is owing to their remembrance of this attention that the inhabitants of the place so rarely shave, hoping that the attention will be repeated; but you can see from their chins that it never has. *Vigo* is remarkable for being one of the few places in the world where sardines are met with outside tins. When released they swim quite freely, and appear to lead as happy a life as any other fish.

We now leave the coast of Spain and steam along in sight of the Portuguese shore. The difference between Spain and Portugal is very great. The first is a monarchy, the second a republic. The postage stamps not only differ in colour, but actually vary in design. Unfortunately, no space remains for further political considerations. When gazing over the rail do not fail to note that, notwithstanding all this, the mountains look *exactly the same!*

The first Portuguese port, in one sense only, is the port of—

Oporto. In other respects it is not. That is to say, Oporto is not always the port of Oporto. This should be clear enough, but for the sake of the duller readers of this book—though I doubt if any exist—I will make the matter still plainer. Oporto is the port of Oporto only for the more puny steamers—petty purveyors of port wine in pipes, preserves, prunes and all that sort of thing. For large liners the Port of Oporto is Leixoões.

You see how perfectly simple the thing is when once you take the trouble to think it out! Anyhow, you will know now, and you will observe with what cunning care you have been led on to learn a lesson about two ports when you had no idea that you were dealing with more than one! This is what is known as a successful example of intensive cultivation.

Captains do not seem to admire Leixoões as much as they should. They say that the harbour is so small that it is liable to scratch the paint off their ships. This is probably sheer fussiness. If the passengers do not mind, why should *they*? After all, it is the passengers who pay their way, and I have a strong suspicion that the captain does not shell out a single sou for his sea trip!

No, I think there is very little wrong with Leixoões, except that, from the coast, the ordinary passenger cannot watch the growth of the coy, inland, port wine tree. Then there is its name—probably contracted for some reason best known to the Portuguese. The outstanding feature of this town is that it is pronounced Layshowens! This seems so unreasonable that we had better pass on at once to—

Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, a city situated on seven hills. Its inhabitants seem proud of this, but carefully avoid a reference to any valley. We must now pass from geography to history. Lisbon was known as "the Gate of the Americas." That was some centuries ago, when the chivalry of Portugal sent the shimmering sails of its ships scudding in shoals to scour the sunny south seas. (Upon my soul, I do not know why this book comes out in these sort of sentences !)

To-day I fear that Lisbon is rather like an old actor turned out to grass—it lives so largely on its past. Some of the grandeur still remains. Thus, when writing to a bootmaker, if you omit to place the superlatives "most illustrious and most excellent" before his name, his wrath will probably lead him to supply you with brown paper instead of leather. But Lisbon is a fine town, inhabited by quite a number of nice people. There is a church on a hill, where a number of the dead Portuguese kings are said to be preserved. They are on view. Unfortunately, it is the latter part of the sentence which is completely incorrect. There is also a river, the Tagus, which runs much faster than the town.

Having thus thoroughly surveyed Lisbon, we now leave the shores of Europe to mourn behind us. The bow pushes out towards a glowing world and the reluctant stern follows—almost, if not quite, as swiftly. Presently [*There is no reason why I should tell you exactly when. It would be unfair to the subtle plan of this book to go into sordid and precise details of period and time. There is neither leisure nor space for that ; besides, if you wish to*

know whether the day be Tuesday, or Wednesday, or Thursday, is there no such thing as a time-table to be obtained at the trifling cost of a stamp from any respectable shipping agent in the United Kingdom? But I am sure that none of my readers will be so unreasonable as to expect that a description on the grand scale such as this should be marred by any mere triviality. Here every word is weighed and every line must count.] there rises up from the sparkling blue horizon a most enchanting island. This is—

Madeira, a haunt of scenery, flowers, cane chairs, yellow wine, ox-sledging, mountain pebble tobogganing and diving boys. From here onward the warmth on board begins and grows. Passengers

burst into flannels, ducks and sudden affections. They explain to each other the Southern Cross, or where it will be when it comes over the horizon—and the arriving steward begins to know exactly when to cough. So I am told! A married author has no part in such transactions, but nothing on earth can prevent him from looking on!

Madeira is remarkable for the tunny, a fierce marine creature, which often engages in battle with an esteemed human



K. F. Jeffries.
Madeira Diving Boy.

auxiliary, spelt in exactly the same way, except that it has a double *m* instead of a double *n*! The chief amusement at Madeira is that of wrapping coppers in silver paper. These are then thrown overboard, and the expression on the faces of the diving boys is frequently a source of modest hilarity! Having left with regret this interesting spot, it is only on certain voyages that you will visit—

St. Vincent—a rocky island, barren of everything but submarine cable gossip. In the centre of the main street three comparatively noble trees rise from three pots, and the inhabitants loyally take their turn to sit in their shade. In *St. Vincent* water costs as much as beer, and the price of the latter is sufficient to make it advisable to move on at once.

After this you will sail on tropic seas, harking to the joyous flutter of the flying-fishes' wings,

HOW TO DISTINGUISH GULLS.



Albatross.
Distance
5 miles.



Herring Gull.
Distance
 $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.



Lesser Gull.
Distance
245 yards.

marvelling at the shout of the sunrise, wondering at the bright wail of the sunset (have no fear: we will refrain from toying humorously with this last!), while the following procession of sea-fowl beg like puppy-dogs and the lemon-squash hisses in its glass. All this will happen, and much more, until you catch sight of—

Fernando de Noronha, one of the most curiously contrived islands in the world. It has a sloping peak which looks exactly as though it had been bent by the wind, although it is just possible that some geologist may have another explanation. It has also a hole right through its narrow part, through which you can see the ocean shining from the other side. There are many theories concerning this really remarkable hole. The most convincing seems to me the one which attributes it to the passage of a school of seven hundred and eighty-one porpoises that, failing to notice the island when it first rose from the sea, jumped clean through it. On reflection, it is difficult to understand what other cause could reasonably be supposed to have produced this phenomenon. Few people land willingly at *Fernando de Noronha*, which is inhabited by convicts and land crabs. The former have little to do except to teach the latter to behave at meals and to stop gnashing their claws.

Fernando de Noronha, although Brazilian soil, is not South America. It is only now that you are on the eve of the Great Discovery. From this point you will push on straight to the continent, hitting, first of all, if the captain has made no mistake—

Pernambuco, on the Brazilian mainland. Unfortunately, I do not know the nature of the first remark made by the first person to sight *Pernambuco*. Of course, one has a very shrewd idea. Almost certainly, surveying the brand new land—which might have contained anything from cannibals and cats to caterpillars and cabbages—he

observed, "Well, here we are!" Then, his men crowding joyously round him on the poop, he most probably added, "Wherever it is."

But I am not absolutely certain on this point. This is a pity, because this sort of thing interests a certain class of people, and there is bound to be a record of it, either at Selfridge's Bureau of Information, or elsewhere. As ill-fortune will have it, it is clear that there is no leisure for this research. Nevertheless, one has a feeling that a chapter of this sort is incomplete without it.

As it happens, I am able to produce some later evidence on the point which is still more important. I remember—aye, and as well as though it had been only yesterday!—a remark at this very spot which threw a strange light on the existence of the place. It was in the nature of a question put by one who set eyes on that tropical place for the first time—a woman, with three unruly children, very large feet and a violent cold in the nose—carelessly caught, peppermint fought—who was travelling by the R.M.S.P.—No, even at the cost of another serious omission, we must steer clear of names and the remotest chance of libel.

She was gazing at the large tug which had come out from behind the coral reef and which was staggering across the swell towards our ship. It had some way to travel—almost as far as we have had to come to arrive at this remark of hers. As I have said, it was in the form of a question. Here it is:

"What is that enormous washing basket doing on that boat?"

Now, the remarkable part of the whole affair is that it was not a washing basket at all !

You probably think that this is the end of the story. It is not ; there is much more to come. What has really happened is that, by the introduction of this brief but truthful narrative, I have managed to introduce the most striking feature of Pernambuco.

As a matter of fact, this supposed washing basket is an old and familiar friend. No Pernambuconian passenger is complete without it. It is the hamper provided by a thoughtful company for hoisting people from the tug to the deck of the steamer ; or, if you wish for complete accuracy, it may be used the other way about.

The affair is quite simple. The thing is up-ended, attached to a wire rope and sways gently in pathetic invitation. You enter through the wicker-work trapdoor, other people follow, until the only spaces left are those little bays of atmosphere where people's persons sink in, or, at all events, fail to project. The door is fastened, the winch rattles and up goes the basket, twisting and swinging merrily. As it descends upon the deck a dozen willing hands receive it, pat it and open its trapdoor. Then the visitors come out just like the animals from the Ark. As a source of entertainment it never fails !

Pernambuco contains a certain amount of interest beyond this human picnic basket. There are houses, some of them old Dutch Colonial (the Dutch occupied the place once, but, of course, we can't go into all *that* now), rivers, bridges, palms and cocoanut trees. On the ocean are coal-black, shining

negroes, each sitting upon a seat raised above a few crossed planks, which simple structure is propelled by a triangular sail.

Going to sea in one of these openwork structures must be like going for a walk in the rain under the skeleton ribs of an umbrella. Fortunately for these bold, black fishermen, the ocean cannot jump up in the same way that the rain falls down. These little trips, however—and some of them are quite long—must be terribly annoying to the conscientious shark, who sees the meal hung up just out of his reach. And, talking of these sharks, you will hear ardent tales of perfectly gigantic fellows who shake the deck with a flip of their tail. They must exist, because everybody else has seen them, though personally I have never been privileged to watch anything much bigger than a large dogfish after dinner—and this, in spite of as much bait heaved overboard as would stock a butcher's shop!

From Pernambuco southwards we skirt the Brazilian coast, making the usual remarks about the mountains and the lighthouses, that look just like little dots of icing on green and purple wedding cakes, and, as always, wondering why someone does not provide the whales with handkerchiefs instead of letting them blow their noses right up in the air, until we arrive at—

Bahia, which is short for *Bahia de Todos os Santos*, which, again being translated, means Bay of All the Saints. The name was almost certainly shortened owing to the increase in the population, which made the original idea seem a little optimistic.

Bahia is remarkable for the largest negresses and the smallest monkeys in the world. Also, there are times when, seen from the sea, the place gives exactly the impression of being painted on canvas. You feel that, if you advanced a few steps, you could push through the screen on which the houses, hills, verdure and palms were so cunningly contrived. But, let me give you a word of advice, any such attempt will end in sheer waste of time.



If in Bahia, never fail to enter the contrivance known as the castor-oil lift when you desire to proceed from the lower town to the upper. In this case the name does not imply that you are lifted up, or even cast down, by the castor oil itself; it arises merely because this comforting beverage is used to lubricate the machinery. It is said by some that no inspection occurs here; it is found cheaper to have an occasional accident. But I have never heard of anything going wrong with the lift. It probably gets along without either—which, when you come to think of it, is a splendid advertisement for the persuasive influence of castor oil.

Bahia also grows some oranges which are difficult to describe. Of course, in the language of the cookery and guide book, you might say that they are "much esteemed." So they are—the most estimable things in the world! They are to the ordinary orange what the rose is to the dandelion, what a bird of Paradise is to the swallow;

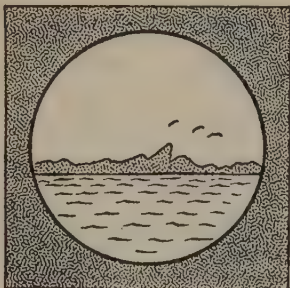
one might even say, that which a poet is to a publisher. But if one *did* say a thing like this last it would have to be explained in the same breath that this is only a concession to the public point of view. Most publishers are far more moral and upright than most poets. This is because they go straight ahead in a definite furrow, and their minds refuse to waggle.

But about these Bahia oranges. They are the most delightful fruit that ever hung at the end of a green branch. Large, luscious, pipless things, they make you regret that the human palate does not extend from the teeth down to—anyhow, as far as the fourth waistcoat button! How fortunate for the inhabitants of the Garden of Eden that they knew not this fruit. If an ordinary apple sufficed to bring about the fall of man, imagine what would have been the result of a Bahia orange! It would have laid low the population of a picture palace!

It is time, however, to abandon this heavier form of philosophy. There is an infallible guide to the accurate testing of really solid reading: this may be judged by the length of the paragraph. If only one or two go to the page, you will readily know that the matter is thoughtful and well worth while; but if the page looks as if a spider or two, after having fallen in the ink, had crawled quite a short way across the hungry white paper, you had better take warning at once, lest your mind drink in mere froth and remain in much the same lamentable condition as before. In which case you will abandon it, and pass on, just as we do now, to—

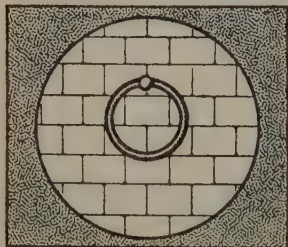
RIO SEEN THROUGH THE PORTHOLE.

Thres original sketches on the spot by the Author.



Rio: distant view.

Entrance to the Harbour,
showing typical mountain
side, palm top, and parrot
seated on branch of silk-
cotton tree.



Safely at rest: showing
dock wall.

Rio, the capital of Brazil. According to one of our very greatest writers, one rolls down to Rio. Why, I do not know, unless it be for the sake of alliteration; and, as my conscience is tender on this point, we will drop the subject.

Rio is short for Rio de Janeiro. This, rendered into English, means "The River of January." The reason for this nomenclature is that there is no river at Rio, although its discoverer thought there was; and so the inhabitants, in order to correct first impressions, have cut out the last two words!

Rio is the most beautiful city in the world. So now you know.

It has also a particular mountain—a peak known as the Sugar Loaf. It is curious to reflect that, although the Sugar Loaf has stood there for many, many years, its real use was discovered only a short time ago. Then men took wires and stretched them from the peak downwards. And, hanging from those wires, goes a little tramcar, just like a tiny square bird, right up in the sky. All this for a little meal—and a gigantic panorama! As a sensation it may be magnificent; *mais ce n'est pas la terre!* Nor even the sea, on which we will at once take refuge, and so to—

Santos—a port, nestling some way up a river by the side of which the bullfrogs carol joyously in their fine old mangrove homes. There are mountains behind and an acrobatic railway to climb them.

Santos is said to be the most important coffee centre in the world. A very interesting calculation has just been made by the statistician-in-chief

here concerning the magnitude of a single season's crop. It appears that if two senior wranglers and three wrangling spinsters were to begin counting the beans, it would take exactly ninety-eight years, nine months, three days, five hours, four minutes and nine-tenths of a second for them to drop the rest of it and take up another profession.



Female Bullfrog teaching her young
to sing.

The former inhabitants of Santos were yellow-fever germs. By some strange oversight these have been allowed to die out completely, and not even the skeleton of one remains. The loss to science and the medical profession by this act of vandalism is incalculable. The place of these interesting old dwellers has now been taken by a number of

specimens of the tourist genus, who persistently haunt several pleasure resorts in the outskirts. It is said that various hotel proprietors are now adopting stringent precautions against these pests.

We now leave the Brazilian coast behind and steam alongside that of Uruguay. Presently we arrive at—

Montevideo, the capital of the country which possesses more u's than almost any other land in the world.

I am glad that we have reached *Montevideo*. This happy arrival enables me to remove some of that painful impression which must have been produced when we were at Pernambuco. Now, I know exactly the first words used by the man who first sighted *Montevideo*: they were, "*Monte video*." This, translated, implies roughly "I see a mountain." Now this, although you might not believe it, is historically correct, although I cannot for the moment remember whether this speech came from the lips of Cabot, Diego Garcia, or de Solis, who all played about here in their ships at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Anyhow, I am fairly certain that it was one of the three. But, even if it were someone quite different, such as Magellan—which I am almost prepared to swear that it was not—it is not worth while climbing up two steps and hauling down a most ponderous volume merely for the sake of one solitary name. After all, people seem to forget that this is not an encyclopædia.

Whoever it was, that old navigator possessed a journalistic temperament which, mind you, is no detriment, but rather an asset. That alleged

mountain is a one-yard thing in the country of the plain. We should call it a hill. If you took away the fort from the top of it you might even call it a mound. Never mind! It does not do to be unkind to a lonely thing like that, far away from all its friends, peering up plaintively from the midst of the flat lands.

Leaving the pleasant town of Montevideo, we enter the River Plate, otherwise the Silver River, so called because no silver has ever been found anywhere near it. Even its colour is seldom silvery. It begins by being light yellow and deepens to a rich chocolate as we approach—

Buenos Aires, the great capital of Argentina—the queen of southern cities, the hub of Latin-America and the largest Tango-exporting centre in the world. Buenos Aires is a town where the leisured lead luxurious lives and where the gay song of the dollar trills out its most festive notes. It is infested by millions of millionaires, some of them parti-millionaires, others multi-millionaires and yet others who owe millions to millions of people.

Buenos Aires is the London, also the Paris, also the New York of South America. It is chiefly remarkable for the fact that it is the place where you are pushed off the ship—yes, whether you want to go or not.

It is a shock. Until the arrival at this place the company has not betrayed any symptom of inhospitality; its officials have been quite polite and nice. And now, quite suddenly, they tell you that they absolutely can't do with you any more! They even take your luggage and deposit it

straight on the shore ! They seem to know that you *must* follow your luggage.

So you do ; but the affair is most humiliating. It is an ignominious end to what might have been so pleasant a trip !



The end of it.

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